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A

REVIEW

OF THE

CONDUCT

OF THE

PRINCE OF WALES,

FROM HIS

ENTRANCE INTO PUBLIC LIFE,

TILL

HIS LATE OFFER

TO UNDERTAKE THE

GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND.

H. George IV, King of Nth Ng.

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A

REVIEW

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CONDUCT OF THE PRINCE OF WALES,

&c., &c.

IT is my intention in the following pages to conſider the accuſations which have been circulated with ſuch induſtry againſt the Prince of Wales. The writer who undertakes to reſiſt popular clamour, muſt not be deterred by the dread of any new clamour to be raiſed againſt himſelf. Thoſe who are themſelves ſlaves of public prejudice may accuſe me of ſervility: but true independence is, in my opinion, as much ſhewn in deſpiſing the cry of a deluded multitude, as in braving the vengeance of a tyrannical court. That equity which I have been taught to revere deprives no man of his right to be defended againſt calumny, becauſe he chances

to be born a Prince; and the generoſity which I have learnt to cheriſh is not a baſe and unmanly paſſion to pull down greatneſs, merely becauſe I am lower. I can no more calumniate a prince than a peaſant. I can no more flatter a mob than a king. All ranks of men have, in my eyes, equal rights to juſtice and candour. My ſpirit keeps me at as proud a diſtance from the rabble of calumniators as from the herd of flatterers. I have not learnt that new and paradoxical juſtice, which teaches that thoſe only are to be ſlandered with impunity whom the law has made the objects of reſpect; and that to be born for the higheſt Magiſtracy, which the policy of our commonwealth has created for the protection of the people, is of itſelf a ſufficient crime to merit for the libellers of thoſe whoſe only guilt is their birth, impunity, ſupport, and reward. Supreme Magiſtracy, under all its lawful forms, exiſts for the benefit, and is, therefore, entitled to the reſpect, of mankind. Men of integrity reſiſt the ſeductions of power. Men of courage defy its menaces. Men of independent ſpirit withſtand its encroachments; but generous men do not ſelect the moment of the temporary unpopularity of greatneſs for the opportunity of their invectives; and wiſe and good men of every

character

character, as long as the frame of the ſtate is to exiſt, deem it their duty to reſpect and guard the reputation of its higheſt Magiſtrates as inſeparably woven with the well-being, dignity, and quiet of the whole community.

With theſe ſentiments I proceed to conſider my propoſed ſubject. I am one of the moſt zealous friends of that liberty of diſcuſſion which has produced the clamour that I ſhall oppoſe. Nothing, doubtleſs, is more uſeful and deſirable than that public opinion ſhould exerciſe a controul over the conduct of perſons of the moſt exalted ſtation, that they may be deterred from wrong, as well by reſpect for the ſentiments of their own contemporaries, as by a dread of the verdict of hiſtory and the judgement of impartial poſterity. They who inform the public of the conduct of the great and powerful, and diſcuſs its propriety with an honeſt freedom, may be truly ſaid to exerciſe a moral magiſtracy of great truſt; and they are certainly entitled to no inconſiderable praiſe when they demean themſelves in this diſcuſſion with independence and integrity; with a perpetual regard to truth and decency; with reverence for the laws, and with due reſpect for thoſe

whom the laws have ſet over them. Even if their animadverſions be occaſionally too free, yet while they appear to be the effuſions of indignant honeſty, we are bound to excuſe, and inclined almoſt to applaud, ſo honourable a fault. But in proportion as free diſcuſſion is noble in its principle, wholeſome in its effects, and pardonable even in its honeſt exceſſes, ſo muſt our indignation be increaſed when we diſcover that affected independence is only the maſk of venality, and that the pretended reformers of our morals are in truth nothing better than proſtituted libellers, agents in a baſe conſpiracy to deſtroy the character of an individual, who have no motive but hire, no means but calumny, and no end but the gratification of thoſe who pay them. The more we reſpect a bold and upright examination of public characters and public meaſures, the more heartily muſt we deteſt ſuch mockery and proſtitution.

The conduct of the Prince of Wales has lately been treated with a freedom, to uſe no harſher term, of which there is not I believe any previous example in the hiſtory of this country. Accuſations of a very ſerious nature, with the moſt indefatigable induſtry, and under high-ſounding pretences of regard for

for the intereſts of virtue, have of late been inceſſantly repeated again His Royal Highneſs. They have been diſperſed with an activity ſcarcely credible throughout every part of the kingdom, and, as they have hitherto been almoſt unreſiſted on his part, it was impoſſible that they ſhould fail of producing ſome conſiderable effect. Few men will deny that theſe publications have in their language paſſed the limits of the largeſt indulgence which can be claimed for the preſs: but the degree of blame which belongs to this exceſs will, according to the principle which I have already laid down, be, in a great meaſure, regulated by our opinion of the motives of the writers. We ſhall not be diſpoſed to conſider, with much harſhneſs, that indiſcreet warmth which ſometimes marks the language of ſincerity. But we have other feelings towards thoſe who counterfeit for hire the indignation of virtue, and make their calumnies paſs current by the ſtamp of honeſty. In which of theſe two views we are to regard the libellers of the Prince of Wales, we ſhall be beſt enabled to decide by a diſcuſſion of the truth or falſehood of their charges; an examination which may throw ſome light on the motives of the immediate agents, and entitle us to form

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ſome probable conjecture who were their inſtigators. Profeſſions of independence are become ſo ſuſpicious from all writers, and are ſo unavailing from an anonymous writer, that I muſt appeal on this ſubject to the breaſts of my readers, and leave them to judge whether the ſpirit which the following pages breathe be that of ſervility and venality. I have no intereſt in challenging a ſingle juror on ſuch a trial, except ſuch as are blind enough not to ſee as much meanneſs in authors who miniſter to the malignity of the multitude by ſlander, as in thoſe who court the favour of the great by adulation. I am content that they ſhould think me ſervile who miſtake invidious cenſure for independence, and candour for ſervility.

The queſtion that I propoſe to examine can in no way be regarded as unintereſting. The ſufferings of any individual under calumny will intereſt a generous man. The reflection that he *may* have aſſented too haſtily to that calumny will render it his duty to reconſider more accurately the grounds of his belief. Under whatever form of government a community of men may chuſe to live, they will never fail to diſcover that a cordial obedience to the laws is inſeparable

from

from a decent reſpect for thoſe who are to execute the laws. Whether the title of the ſupreme Magiſtrate be Conſul or Stadtholder, Preſident or King, it imports the commonwealth that his character ſhall not be lightly attacked. It is a part of the national fame. It is one of the bulwarks of the public ſafety; and it is therefore fenced round with legal penalties far more ſevere than are provided againſt the calumniator of a private citizen. As long as the people of England ſhall chuſe to preſerve that free monarchy, which it has been the ſlow work of the toil, the valour, and the wiſdom of their anceſtors for a thouſand years to build up, the reputation of thoſe who are, or may be, their ſovereigns can never appear to them as a matter of indifference or unconcern: but to thoſe who, like myſelf, are not content to view this conſtitution with mere cold and paſſive acquieſcence, the queſtion will aſſume a higher intereſt. The few who are yet ſingular enough to prize the Britiſh Conſtitution *ſincerely for its freedom*, and unfaſhionable enough to regard it as the beſt ſecurity which, as far as experience has hitherto aſcertained, the wiſdom of man can deviſe for liberty, will conſider very ſeriouſly an attack on a character, which the people cannot be taught to deſpiſe

without the danger of their deſpiſing the conſtitution itſelf. All danger to the Engliſh Government, at all times and from all quarters, would fill ſuch men with affliction and alarm. But it would be a bitter aggravation of their ſorrow, it would be a ſevere wound to their pride and moral taſte, if that noble fabric, inſtead of falling under the ſtroke of an illuſtrious, though flagitious, uſurper; or being laid in ruins by the ſhock of a revolution, ſplendid, however calamitous, ſhould periſh ignominiouſly, undermined by the ignoble hands of hireling calumniators.

——Captique dolis lacrymiſque *coactis*
Quos neque Tydides, nec Lariſſæus Achilles
Non anni domuere decem non mille carinæ.

Other nations have ſacrificed their quiet, ſometimes for the imaginary, and ſometimes for the real, intereſts of royalty, religion, and liberty. But if the traducers of the Prince of Wales ſhall wound the Engliſh monarchy through his ſide, Great Britain will be the firſt nation that ever was cheated of her government by baſe perſonal detraction.

The accuſations which have been made by theſe libellers, to ſpeak generally of them, are

are of a very ſingular nature, and not ſuch as have been ſucceſsfully employed in former times to excite clamour againſt princes. Among them there is not a ſingle quality which is ſufficient to make a man contemptible or a king dangerous. There is no hypocriſy, no circumvention, no avarice, no hardneſs of heart, no arrogance. There is no ſeed of tyranny. There is no illiberal and ſordid vice. There is not one fault which might not be found, and which has not been found in the characters of men who were brave, honourable, ſincere, tender, generous, juſt, magnanimous. There is none of thoſe charges which might not have been made againſt princes who were the fathers of their country and the delight of the world. They impute faults indeed, but ſuch faults as experience has proved to be reconcileable with the moſt exalted and with the moſt amiable qualities of human nature. Far be it from me to diſgrace myſelf by any praiſe which might have the ſlighteſt appearance of adulation. I affirm nothing concerning the virtues of the Prince of Wales. I only reduce the charges of his accuſers to their juſt value by ſhewing that the faults imputed to him are not inconſiſtent with the excellent qualities of which I have ſpoken. What

then are theſe faults? I ſhall ſtate them fairly. I ſhall diſſemble or extenuate none of them. Neither taſte nor good manners will indeed allow me to adopt the language of his calumniators. Their charges may therefore loſe part of their groſſneſs in my ſtatement, but they ſhall loſe none of their ſtrength. He is accuſed of having been giddy, improvident and prodigal; of having carried magnificence to profuſion, good nature to facility, and vivacity to diſſipation; of not having firmly reſiſted the blandiſhments of pleaſure; of not having always liſtened to the friendly counſels of prudence; of not having ſet the example to a diſſolute age of the moſt correct and rigorous purity of manners; of having been betrayed into irregularities in the moſt expoſed and ſlippery ſituation by the impetuous paſſions of youth and the alluring enjoyments of a poliſhed and corrupt ſociety. I am not conſcious of having done injuſtice to any of theſe accuſations. Strip them of that coarſe and loathſome declamation in which they have been involved, and they amount to nothing more than what I have ſtated. There are among them none of thoſe vices which poiſon the fountain of action, which pervade, taint and debaſe the whole character of man. They may exiſt in the

ſame nature with the moſt ſolid virtues, and may leave the root and ſtock of thoſe virtues vigorous and ſound. The paſſions from which they ſpring may be matured in the progreſs of age into the moſt generous and beneficent principles of action. They are indeed moſt pardonable and leaſt unſeemly in youth, and yet there have been men to whom they have adhered during the whole of life without entitling us to degrade them from that high rank to which their other excellencies had raiſed them. They are the frailties of men, and they have been the frailties of good and great men. No hiſtory furniſhes us with an example of theſe vices alone having ruined the reputation and popularity of a prince. The judgement of the public, which, when it is uninfluenced, is on moral conduct generally right, has preſerved a juſt medium between approving theſe faults and confounding them with diſhonourable or deteſtable vices. Thoſe great hiſtorians who are the repreſentatives of the moral feelings and judgement of the human race, have, even the moſt pure and ſevere of them, treated this ſubject in the ſame manner. Does Tacitus point the thunder of his eloquence againſt the ordinary diſſipation of a court? Do the amorous frailties of Francis I.

blacken the character of that hero in the pages of Robertſon? And if we were to take away from Charles II. his public crimes, who would view him with deteſtation merely on account of his private pleaſures? I am aſhamed to argue ſuch a matter ſeriouſly, and if poſterity ſhall retain any memory of theſe miſerable conteſts which are raiſed to a ſiniſter importance by the miſchiefs which they may produce, it will appear monſtrous and incredible that ſuch a clamour could have been raiſed on ſuch a ſubject. I am aware that I may be charged with inculcating a lax morality.—Perhaps I have as great a veneration for purity of manners as the objector, whoever he may be.—Perhaps I may have as deeply conſidered the circumſtances in the nature of man, and in the intereſts of ſociety, from which the peculiar value of that excellent virtue is derived. But I have alſo learnt from philoſophy, (and mine has not been acquired in a licentious ſchool,) not only the general rules and principles of morals, but the relative rank and importance of particular duties;—the adaptation of them to age, to ſituation, and to character;—the indulgence or diſapprobation with which ſome vices are to be viewed in different ſtates of manners, and in different conditions of life;—the mixed ſitu-

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ation of ſociety, in which the temptations to vice are ſometimes inſeparably interwoven with the incitements to virtue;—and the mixed nature of man, in which we ſometimes tremble to eradicate, even a vicious propenſity, leſt we ſhould deſtroy the principle of the neighbouring virtue. I will venture to affirm, that whoever has not deeply conſidered theſe topics, may be, indeed, a good teacher of moral rules, but never can be a competent judge of moral conduct. I am confident, that an appeal to theſe important conſiderations would juſtify me, as having neither betrayed the intereſts of morals by a dangerous laxity on the one hand, or by an equally dangerous auſterity on the other. But this is not a fit opportunity for ſuch profound and extenſive diſcuſſions; and I am entitled, for the preſent, to reſt on that deciſion which has been pronounced by the feelings of mankind; a tribunal in queſtions of human conduct, from which there is no appeal. The moraliſt himſelf is only the collector or interpreter of the deciſions pronounced by moral feeling.

That ſuch accuſations ſhould, indeed, have produced any conſiderable effect, may juſtly ſeem unaccountable to thoſe who have not ſuffici-

ſufficiently conſidered the powerful and irreſiſtible aſcendant which has in our times been gained by the preſs. It is natural for writers to celebrate the inſtrument which extends and eſtabliſhes their own reputation; and they have hitherto, perhaps, regarded the effects of the art of printing rather with the eye of panegyric than with that of ſevere and impartial philoſophy. I ſpeak not of its ineſtimable uſe in preſerving and perpetuating knowledge, but of its immediate power over the ſentiments of the Public. In this view, if we reduce all that has been ſaid of it to the ſobriety of exact truth, we ſhall find, that this memorable diſcovery only furniſhes an eaſier means of more rapidly and widely diffuſing opinions, true, or falſe, uſeful, or pernicious. It will, indeed, be ſaid, that if diſcuſſion be free, truth will certainly prevail over error. To receive this poſition as univerſally true, would require a more extravagant confidence in the infallibility of the human underſtanding than hiſtory or experience will allow me to entertain. It is, however, generally true; but there is a very material diſtinction neceſſary in its application. In matters of mere ſcience and ſpeculation, when there is ample time for ſerious and continued diſcuſſion, reaſon is indeed likely, after many

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luctuations of opinion, and in a long ſeries f years, ultimately to prevail: but in all ueſtions, with regard to the policy of overnments, the merits of ſtateſmen, the rivate or public conduct of individuals, here action muſt cloſely follow conviction, here is no time for that diſcuſſion, in which lone truth is likely to be finally triumphant. The miſchief may be conſummated before the emedy can be applied. Poſterity may reverſe he judgement, but they cannot repair its ef-ects. Whatever may be the effect of the art f printing, therefore, in ſcientific diſcuſſions, ve may ſafely affirm, that, in matters which egard practice alone, it may be as effectually employed in diſſeminating pernicious error, as n diffuſing the moſt wholeſome truth. But hough this art be thus of ambiguous ten-dency, and the ready miniſter alike of good or evil to the world, yet it is, without doubt, he moſt powerful inſtrument for forming and directing opinion, that ever was diſcovered by he ſagacity, or employed by the ſkill, of man.—It tranſmits the ſlighteſt ſuſpicion of a capital to the remoteſt province.—It gives importance to the moſt trivial, and perma-nence to the moſt ſhort-lived, rumours.—It furniſhes the idle with converſation, and the credulous with belief. By importunity, and repeti-

repitition it works an impreſſion even on the firmeſt underſtanding. It mingles itſelf with our amuſements; it blends itſelf with our occupations; it pervades every village; it penetrates every hamlet, and it tranſmits with electric velocity the contagion of paſſion and opinion from one extremity of a kingdom to the other. But this art, thus wonderful in its effects, (whatever may be the fond imaginations and proud conceits of fanatics who call themſelves philoſophers), has not changed the nature of man. He is ſtill the ſame animal; ſtill equally liable to be inflamed by declamation, ſeduced by ſophiſtry, and duped by impoſture. The art of printing is a new inſtrument which may be uſed with equal effect by fanatics, by impoſtors, by declaimers, by ſophiſts, by ſlanderers, by incendiaries, and by tyrants.—When we conſider its energy, we ſhall ſee that it is capable of producing any effect however great; and, when we reflect on its venality, we muſt perceive that it may be directed to any end however profligate. The preſs may be engroſſed by corruption or commanded by terror. It may become the auxiliary of tyranny, as well as the inſtrument of reaſon and freedom. It may enſlave the underſtandings as well as the actions of men. It

was reſerved, however, for our times to ſee the full efficacy of this powerful art. Books and even pamphlets are read but by comparatively a few; but the prodigious multiplication of newſpapers, has ſo multiplied the channels by which opinions may be infuſed into the minds of the multitude, as to place the preſent age in a ſituation altogether new. It is a circumſtance of ſo much importance, that it cannot fail to attract the attention of future hiſtorians and philoſophers, when they attempt to account for the ſtupendous revolutions which have paſſed under our eyes. A combination of newſpapers is now ſufficient to raiſe any clamour, however abſurd; to propagate any calumny, however groundleſs; to load any individual with a temporary odium, and to delude a whole people for a time long enough to reap the full fruit of the deluſion. To that combination I chiefly aſcribe the momentary effect produced by the accuſations againſt the Prince of Wales, which is ſo much greater than they could have obtained in any former period, and ſo apparently diſproportioned to their intrinſic weight. Other cauſes united with, and produced that combination, which cannot be well underſtood without a ſhort review of his Royal Highneſſes's public conduct. The years which

have paſſed ſince he has been of an age to take part in public affairs have been few indeed in number, but more fertile in extraordinary events than a century in common times. He had juſt reached the age of manhood, when a blind perſeverance in a ſyſtem of tyrannical policy, finally ſevered a great empire in North America from the Britiſh dominions. He became united both in private friendſhip and political connection with the principal perſons of that party in the kingdom, who had uniformly reſiſted that miſguided policy. A cautious prudence may perhaps ſuggeſt, that it is more wiſe and more becoming in the Heir-apparent to the Crown, to remain unconnected with any political party, and to obſerve a perfect neutrality amidſt the diviſions of a People, whom it may be one day his duty to govern with equal and impartial protection. Experience has, however, proved that it is very difficult, atleaſt in England, to preſerve this neutrality. Scarcely any Prince of Wales has ever preſerved it, and it may perhaps be doubted whether, if it were more eaſy, it would be very deſirable. The conſtitution of this country has not inſulated the King from ſociety, nor exalted him in ſolitary grandeur inacceſſible to the ſentiments of his People. The habits of a citizen

in a free ſtate, are the diſcipline in which a King of England is to be reared. He cannot be actuated by the zeal and ardour of citizen without feeling ſomething of that ſpirit of party, which is inſeparable from them, with its faithful attachments, with its honourable and placable enmities, with that mixture of perſonal affection which animates the activity, while it ſoftens the ſternneſs, of political conteſt. Nothing but ſympathy can teach him the feelings and genius of the People whom he is to govern. Nothing but practice can fill him with the knowledge and love of that conſtitution which he is to maintain. To preclude him from party, is in truth to baniſh him from public affairs. "States are made of families. Free States are made up of parties." It would be a token of mean and ungenerous ſpirit in a Prince of Wales, to wrap himſelf up in his royal robes, and contemplate with lazy and ſtupid apathy all the great queſtions that divide his fellow-ſubjects. Even if he were to avoid connection with the parties which appear openly in the country, he muſt almoſt inevitably become the prey of ſome petty and obſcure cabal, intereſted to gain his favour by baſe adulation, to debauch his youthful mind by arbitrary principles, and degrade his character by

habits of low and dark intrigue; an inauſpicious education which muſt cloud the reign of the beſt-intentioned Prince with diſaſter and diſgrace.

But to return to my narrative. The party with whom the Prince of Wales was connected, from various events which it is not my province, but the duty of the hiſtorian, to conſider, loſt their power. The agents of the party which ſupplanted them, directed no inconſiderable portion of their hoſtility againſt his Royal Highneſs. He was too important to be connected with any party, without being ſelected as the chief object of attack by their opponents. The faſhion very early began of magnifying the weakneſſes of his youth into atrocious crimes, and dragging before the eyes of the public the moſt minute particulars of his domeſtic privacy. Men immerſed in the moſt coarſe and ſordid debauchery, ſet up as preachers of ethics, and exhibited a fantaſtic and moſt monſtrous union of every part, in their own practice of diſſipation, but its elegance, with nothing of morality, in judging of others, but its ſeverity. The abuſe of the Prince of Wales became the daily pay and ſubſiſtence of multitudes of libellers, whoſe miſerable productions,

tions, though utterly devoid of elegance, of propriety, and even of grammar, were well adapted to the taſte and malignity of the vulgar of every rank. In the ſtate of public opinion produced by theſe libels, embarraſſments in his private affairs, (of which I ſhall ſoon have occaſion to ſpeak more fully, and which neceſſarily aroſe from the inequality of his revenue to the expence incident to his ſtation), brought the conſideration of his income before Parliament. A propoſition for his relief was at firſt encountered by ambiguous menaces of expoſure and diſgrace, from an adminiſtration openly hoſtile to him, who, however, at laſt gave a tardy and ungracious aſſent to an inadequate increaſe of his income; but who accompanied that aſſent, by inveigling him into a promiſe which they muſt have known it was ſcarcely poſſible for him to obſerve. I will not aſſert that there was any intention of ſyſtematically degrading the Prince of Wales, by alluring him into a promiſe which it was foreſeen he muſt violate. But I will affirm, that if ſuch an intention had exiſted, more effectual means for its accompliſhment could not have been deviſed by the wit of man. Another event ſoon followed, which confirmed the hoſtility of the party in adminiſtration to his Royal

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Highneſs, and redoubled their efforts to blacken his character. I allude to the unfortunate malady of his Majeſty, during which it was propoſed to commit to the Prince the adminiſtration of the Government. His intention was well known to have compoſed a new adminiſtration of perſons, in whom he repoſed more private and political confidence than in the King's Miniſters. Such an intention was well calculated to root ſtill more deeply in the minds of theſe Miniſters, that animoſity againſt him which they had ſo long cheriſhed, and which I fear is not even now utterly extinct. All theſe tranſactions were more than ſufficient to prepare that conſiderable part of the public which ſupported the preſent adminiſtration, to liſten with no great disfavour to accuſations againſt him.

An event was now at hand, which deprived the Prince of the active ſupport of thoſe with whom he had hitherto been connected; and by alienating another large part of the public from his intereſt, ſtill more paved the way for the ſucceſs of calumnies directed againſt him. In the year 1792, the ſtupendous and terrible revolution which ſubverted the French monarchy had begun to agitate, alarm, and divide all Europe. Towards the concluſion of

of that memorable and fatal year, a diviſion of ſentiment, which had for ſome time been ſecretly gathering ſtrength, between important members of the then oppoſition, reſpecting the policy to be adopted by us on the French revolution, broke out into an open rupture. One part of that oppoſition conſidered the convulſion in France not merely as a change of Government in that country, but as the commencement of a plan for ſubverting the ſocial order in all civilized nations; as furniſhing principles and examples of univerſal anarchy, rapine, and proſcription; as iſſuing from men who with a degree of fanatical extravagance hitherto unheard of in the world, had conceived the preſumptuous and frantic project of new modelling, according to the whimſies of their pretended philoſophy, the whole diſcipline and inſtitution of human life. They were of opinion that the peſtilential principles of that revolution had already made numerous proſelytes among the indigent, the diſcontented, and the deſperate in England, as well as in other countries of Europe, who would ſpeedily bury property and perſonal ſafety under the ruins of law and government, unleſs they were repreſſed by the moſt rigorous coercion at home, and unleſs all civilized nations were to join in one

vigorous effort, to cruſh that band of conſpirators againſt the quiet of the human race, by whoſe example the diſaffected of all countries were inſtigated, by whoſe impunity they were encouraged, by whoſe ſucceſs they were inflamed, by whoſe intrigues they were guided, and by whoſe arms they would be ſupported. Theſe opinions were inculcated by Mr. Burke, whom, amidſt wide political differences, I name only to honour. On theſe principles a great body of oppoſition coaleſced with the Miniſter. In theſe principles, (whether fortunately or unfortunately for this country it is not for me here to examine), they were ſupported by a conſiderable part of the nation. The other part of oppoſition, certainly with no leſs horror at the crimes or averſion from the extravagant opinions of France, with no inferior zeal for the quiet of their country, with no colder affection for the laws and conſtitution of their forefathers, entertained different views of the means beſt adapted to preſerve theſe great intereſts. A poſture of formidable neutrality towards the belligerent Powers, and a ſyſtem of moderation and lenity at home, ſeemed to them the moſt effectual means of averting from Great Britain the ſtorm which blackened the face of Europe. They deprecated

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as the greateſt of all calamities an unjuſt war againſt the right of another nation to regulate her own affairs; to be carried on in concert with allies, whoſe recent conduct was not calculated to inſpire much confidence in their juſtice and good faith; which was likely only to provoke the fanaticiſm, and to kindle the national ſpirit of France; and of which the failure muſt degrade all eſtabliſhed governments in the eyes of their ſubjects, and beſtow on the new principles the dangerous luſtre and faſcinating attraction of military ſucceſs. That failure they regarded as almoſt certain; but they entreated their antagoniſts to reflect that it was at leaſt poſſible, and to meditate while it was yet time, on its fatal conſequences. The lenity and forbearance which they recommended at home, had nothing in common with feebleneſs or ſupineneſs. It demanded a firm and vigilant government, and required no relaxation of the wholeſome rigour of the laws. It proceeded on the principle, that the great ſecurity of all governments is the gratitude and affection of the governed; and that this maxim, applicable to all ſtates, is the vital principle of this free Conſtitution; every attempt to guard which by coercion and terror, muſt either taint it with deſpotiſm, or expoſe it to

the hazard of being ſubverted by popular fury. The politic vigilance of Government, and the wholeſome rigour of the law, were not indeed to be relaxed. It was a time that doubtleſs called for caution and vigour: but any innovation on the ſide of authority could have no other effect than that of looſening that reverence ſo deeply implanted in the hearts of the Britiſh nation, for the inſtitutions of their anceſtors, which was the ſureſt bulwark of public tranquillity. It is not my purpoſe to examine the truth of theſe contending opinions, or the force of theſe oppoſite arguments. I only ſtate them hiſtorically, with a view to the influence of the events which aroſe from them upon the ſubject which I am treating. Theſe diſputes were of a nature and magnitude very different from the conteſts of parties in ordinary times. They no longer regarded the merit of rival ſtateſmen, or the propriety of the common meaſures of Government. They touched the very exiſtence of the commonwealth, which each party repreſented to depend upon the adoption of its own ſyſtem; they were too deeply tinged with thoſe paſſions which break out into civil violence and confuſion, not to make neutrality the duty of the Heir-apparent to the Crown. This remark is doubtleſs equally applicable to both parties;

yet, if there was to be any ſlight deviation from pure and abſolute neutrality in the apparent conduct of his Royal Highneſs, it was natural, and perhaps, not unreaſonable, that he ſhould incline towards that party, which, in the opinion of the King, and the majority of the People, were employing the only effectual means for the preſervation of the Monarchy. It might, perhaps, have been ſcarce politic or decorous for his Royal Highneſs to have reſiſted the general opinion at ſuch a moment, on ſuch a ſubject; and ſurely it was ſcarce natural to expect, that, in a period of national pain, and of univerſal apprehenſion of danger to Royalty, the Heir-apparent to the Crown ſhould be the only individual in the kingdom exempt from the alarm. If it was a reaſonable terror, the principle of his conduct was right. If the alarm was groundleſs, or the danger exaggerated, his conduct was at leaſt natural. It would be a ſtrange inverſion of juſtice, to ſelect for the object of peculiar reproach out of the multitudes, who, in 1792, entertained or profeſſed alarms for the ſafety of the Government, the perſon, who, above all others, was, from his ſituation, moſt expoſed to ſuch fears; whoſe conduct was the moſt excuſable, even if they were groundleſs; and whoſe duty was the

moſt imperious, if they were juſt and reaſonable. The generous minds of thoſe who were more immediately affected by the change in his conduct, were incapable of reſenting or even of blaming it. One of the moſt diſtinguiſhed of them had even previouſly adviſed his Royal Highneſs to neutrality. But a ſpirit ſo candid, and placable, is not to be expected, and perhaps, (in the balance of human evils) ſcarcely even to be deſired in the great body of a party. In great minds, zeal for their own principles is perfectly reconcileable with liberality towards thoſe who differ from them. But the majority of human ſouls are not caſt in ſo happy a mould. They can hardly be liberal without being luke-warm; and their candour more often ariſes from defect of zeal, than from comprehenſion of underſtanding. As, therefore, the former conduct of the Prince of Wales had incurred the reſentment of one party, ſo the meaſures which he now thought it right to adopt, deprived him of the active ſupport of the majority of the other. And by a peculiar fatality, the ſame political change, in which ſo many men had, with little loſs of popularity, gained the moſt flattering objects of ambition, detached from the intereſt of his Royal Highneſs his former active ſupporters, without inſuring any new

friends

friends to protect him againſt that calumny which was about to be liberally poured upon his character.—Nor was this all; beſides the two parties of whom I have ſpoken, whoſe conteſts were carried on *Salva republicâ*, who contended within the pale of the Conſtitution, for the adminiſtration of Government, there had ariſen another faction, who openly condemned the whole frame of our polity, and who laboured to render the Monarchy odious through the degradation of the Royal Family. There had always been men in England, who, in the liberty of ſpeculation, indulged a preference for a Republican form of government. The exiſtence of ſuch opinions is, indeed, inſeparable from that boldneſs and range of thought which is the moſt infallible effect of a free conſtitution. But the ſterneſt and moſt hardy of theſe philoſophical republicans reſpected the quiet of their country. Many of the wiſeſt of them confeſſed, that a Republican government was not adapted to the ſituation and character of the Engliſh people. They had imbibed from the immortal writers of Greece and Rome, not merely a Republican enthuſiaſm, but with it alſo the pride of conſcious purity, the high and exalted morality, without which that enthuſiaſm is only a baſe and ferocious ſpirit of mutiny. They loved

loved virtue; they revered the great principles which are the bands of human ſociety; they trembled at the effuſion of civil blood, and their pure and noble natures would have diſdained to employ even for the moſt ſpecious object the mean weapons of calumny and detraction.

I ſhall not attempt to form any eſtimate of the ſtrength of the party of new Republicans, and conſidering the infinite ſhades and fluctuations of human opinion, I ſhould think it the moſt difficult of all conceivable attempts at calculation. But though it may be difficult to aſcertain, and perhaps not very politic to diſcuſs their preciſe ſtrength, yet it is vain to deny the exiſtence and the activity of ſuch a party; and this, at leaſt, muſt be confeſſed by thoſe who are the leaſt hoſtile to them, that they have generally ſhewn themſelves more earneſt in the purſuit of ends than ſcrupulous in the choice of means. What truth there may be in the charge made againſt the Princes of the Houſe of Bourbon of having contributed by their waſteful extravagance to embarraſs the finances of France I have at preſent no means of determining. But no man who was in France during the time of the revolution can be ignorant that

the libels circulated with unceaſing activity againſt the Royal Family, contributed in a great degree to prepare the people for the perſecution and deſtruction of that moſt unfortunate of families, and to harden and ſteel them for the perpetration of many of thoſe atrocities which have made Europe ſhudder, and under the deſcription of which, the terrible eloquence of Tacitus himſelf would have ſunk in conſcious feebleneſs. I am certain of the effect of the libels in depraving public opinion. I am very uncertain of the effect of the diſſipation in having embarraſſed the finances. I doubt very much whether the expence of theſe Princes, however profuſe, could be more than a drop in the vaſt ocean of the expenditure and debt of France. I doubt ſtill more whether all the indignation ſuddenly affected againſt them by the moſt diſſolute of mankind, could have been the unprompted and ſpontaneous movement of a people who had endured and applauded the profuſe and magnificent voluptuouſneſs of Louis XIV., the wild, ſhameleſs and abandoned proſtitution of the regency, and the long union of prodigality and profligate licentiouſneſs which diſgraced the Court of Louis XV. So great and ſudden a change can never be accounted for by the ſuppoſition

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of any natural revolution in public opinion. It certainly did not ariſe from any ſuperior purity of manners attained by the French nation. It was an artificial ſentiment created and fomented by the induſtry of libellers which led the people firſt to deteſt the Royal Family, and afterwards, in the natural progreſs of things, to murder them. The laws in the moment of commotion were ſilent. To moral reſtraints theſe libellers were ſtrangers; and beings without character and without a name, had nothing to loſe in hazarding the moſt atrocious falſehood. No detection of calumny could have debaſed them. They were ſecure by their infamy from the poſſibility of degradation. Thoſe who cannot be lower, are as ſafe from that danger as thoſe who are placed on the moſt inacceſſible height. Their miſerable productions filled the minds of men of ſenſe and taſte with a contempt moſt juſt in itſelf, but moſt fatal in its conſequences. They were ſuffered to circulate unrefuted becauſe deſpiſed, till they had completely poiſoned the opinions of the unhappy populace ſo often deſtined to be the dupe and victim of thoſe, who only affect to be their champions that they may become their oppreſſors. Thoſe extravagant and incredible accuſations from

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which ſober and thinking men recoiled with ſcorn, were calculated, by their very extravagance, to obtain ſucceſs with the vulgar. They gratified the paſſion for the marvellous, and they excited a horror and indignation which diſdained to ſtoop to the drudgery of examining the truth or falſehood of the facts. The whole ſcience of calumny conſiſts in lying impudently, in lying inceſſantly, and in lying extravagantly. It was by this efficatious diſcipline that the moſt poliſhed nation in Europe was gradually trained up to ſuch a degree of depravity as at laſt to endure that horrible accuſation againſt an unfortunate Princeſs to which her magnanimous anſwer ranks her dying moments with the moſt heroic deaths celebrated in hiſtory. This part of the French revolution, perhaps the baſeſt in its means, and the moſt deſtructive in its conſequences of any other, had however proved too effectual for its purpoſe to eſcape imitation in Great Britain. The Prince of Wales had committed a crime unpardonable in the eyes of ſome men by being born the ſon and heir of a King. To make monarchy odious every means were in their opinion lawful. *Scelera ipſa neſas que hac mercede placent.* They who have not ſubmitted their taſte and moral ſenſe to the pain of peruſing

the vile and loathſome libels which have diſgraced both France and England, cannot eaſily conceive the cloſe and ſervile ſpirit of imitation in which *La Vicomterie and Marat* have been copied by *Piggott* * *and Miles* †. To enter into the views of ſuch men, we muſt for a moment ſo far forget our own character as to identify ourſelves with them, and it muſt be confeſſed, that waving as they do truth, virtue and honour, there is nothing likely to be ſo effectual for their purpoſe as this ſort of calumny. Abſtract ſophiſtry on

* Author of an infamous publication called the Jockey Club.

† Author of an ungrammatical and bombaſtic invective againſt the Prince of Wales. This miſerable ſcribbler is indeed a Treaſury hireling. How he came to aſſume the colours of Democracy I ſhall again endeavour to explain when I am forced to return to this diſguſting ſubject. He is the ſame who in one (I forget which) of his wretched publications, exults in Mr. Burke's having become fatherleſs! I amuſed myſelf as this man's writings came out with extracting from them ſome inſtances of that bad grammar, bad Engliſh and groſs nonſenſe, with which they abound. I ſoon, however, found the inſtances ſo numerous as to make the taſk tireſome, and I relinquiſhed it: but I have now before me above an hundred examples of the faults which I have mentioned; a curious and inſtructive proof that no talents are ſo mean, and no endowments ſo ſcanty, that they may not do ſome miſchief when they are favoured by the unfortunate circumſtances of the times.

government, and declamations on political grievances, will always encounter ſome obſtacles in the apathy of a multitude naturally careleſs about public affairs. But perſonal ſlander is level with every underſtanding, and finds in every heart paſſions to flatter and to gratify. Invectives againſt the form or meaſure of a government, can only immediately produce a deſire to change political inſtitutions. Calumny againſt individuals can alone engender that rooted-murderous antipathy againſt them by which the ſalutary object can be obtained of "*purifying the population* *" of a country. The ſyſtem of this party is firſt to make monarchy odious through kings and princes, and afterwards to puniſh kings and princes as criminal, on account of their relation to monarchy. It is a plan which does no diſhonour to the craft of the contrivers. It implies no mean knowledge of the human heart, and a pretty tolerable contempt for the underſtandings of thoſe Royaliſts who are made the inſtruments of its execution.

* This phraſe which is perhaps the moſt familiar way of hinting at a comprehenſive ſcheme of murder that was never adopted, was the expreſſion of Barrere when under the reign of Roberſpierre, he celebrated the happy effect of the Guillotine in extirpating the remaining gentry of France.

Such was the ſtate of the public opinion in relation to the Prince of Wales in the year 1795; and ſo unfortunate was that Prince's ſituation, that with the open hoſtility of one party, and the ſcarce-extinguiſhed reſentment of another, he could no longer hope for the cordial and active ſupport of the third. The Democratiſts deteſted him for his birth; the Adminiſtration had not yet forgotten their reſentment on his former conduct; and the Oppoſition (I ſpeak of the body, not the leaders) were not likely to be entirely reconciled to his late ſeparation from them. Amidſt theſe unfortunate circumſtances, the diſcuſſion of his private embarraſſments again came before Parliament. Delicacy forbids me to hint at *all* the means which might have prevented, and which ought to have prevented ſuch a diſcuſſion from having ever become neceſſary in that aſſembly. My head is not ſo fertile in projects of finance as that of ſome Miniſters; yet even I find no difficulty in conceiving many expedients by which a Patriot Miniſter might have ſpared the feelings of his Royal Highneſs, and prevented the Monarchy from being ſubjected in his perſon to ſuch a degradation at ſuch a time. I forbear to allude to the advice which ſuch a Miniſter might have given His Majeſty.

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paſs over the reſource which the ſale of the Prince's intereſt in the Dutchy of Cornwall might have afforded: I pretend to decide nothing concerning the degree of reſiſtance which it would have been wiſe to oppoſe to his Royal Highneſs's claim, had it even been more doubtful (I in my conſcience think it legally irreſiſtible) to the arrears of that Dutchy during his minority. I ſhall not now examine whether a compoſition of that claim might not have made the means for diſembarraſſing the Prince appear to be a meaſure for relieving inſtead of burdening the public. Theſe expedients, which are only inſtances out of a multitude, I ſhall paſs over in ſilence. It was, indeed, ſaid, that all ſuch projects were idle, becauſe the Public muſt, in all caſes alike, pay. But I humbly apprehend, that in ſuch queſtions, general policy is to be conſidered as well as finance. All plans might equally affect the revenue, but all plans could not equally affect the character of the Prince of Wales. It was of ſome moment to him, whether he ſhould appear to have only imprudently waſted his own property, (no abſolutely unpardonable offence,) or conſumed that of the nation; and unleſs his character be, at leaſt, of as much value to the country as the ſum of money then under

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diſcuſſion, the Engliſh monarchy muſt be the moſt abſurd, expenſive, and pernicious of all eſtabliſhments. So different are my views from thoſe of ſuch calculators, that I conſider the decorum of the mode as almoſt every thing, and the ſubſtance as comparatively nothing. It is vain, however, any longer to dwell on plans which did not occur to the King's Miniſters, or which they thought themſelves bound to reject. They, it ſeems, thought it their duty to make the private affairs of his Royal Highneſs a matter of public and parliamentary diſcuſſion, at a moment when they profeſſed the moſt ſerious alarms for the ſecurity of the monarchy; in a divided country, during a ſeaſon of general commotion abroad, of angry faction and rankling diſcontent at home. Such a reſolution (ſince it did appear to them neceſſary) muſt, doubtleſs, have coſt them many ſevere ſtruggles, between private delicacy and public duty. There is no gentleman in England who would not have thought it a moſt ambiguous and ungracious act of friendſhip to offer him a ſcanty and inadequate pecuniary relief at the expence of making his private diſtreſſes the topic of contending parties, the jeſt of his enemies, the bye word of ſlander; and of proclaiming a general invitation to every baſe

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libeller, who ſubſiſts on vulgar malignity, to traduce and ſtigmatize his character with impunity. There is, perhaps, no man who unites good fortune with prudence in ſo high a degree, that if his moſt ſecret buſineſs were dragged before a popular aſſembly, his character would not ſuffer ſome diminution in dignity. It was thought neceſſary to ſubject the Prince of Wales to the cruel neceſſity of diſcloſing to ſuch an aſſembly, diſtreſſes which a man, very jealous of his honour, would ſcarce entruſt to his moſt confidential friend. Some reſerve and decorum (as much as the nature of popular debate allows) might have been expected in the Houſe of Commons towards his Royal Highneſs. It would be an idle delicacy in me to affect ignorance of what is known to the whole world. The moſt uſual vice with which the majority of that aſſembly are charged, is not an untractable and mutinous ſpirit of independence. Their bittereſt enemies cannot charge them with any proneneſs to harraſs the executive government, and to clog the progreſs of the national buſineſs by a wanton and captious Oppoſition. It might have been hoped, that the excellent diſcipline to which a ſucceſſion of Miniſters had trained majorities in that Houſe would not be relaxed for the ſpecial purpoſe of annoying

noying the Prince of Wales. And this was the rather to have been expected, becauſe Mr. Pitt could not be accuſed of ſo remarkable a facility and milkineſs of nature, that he was more likely than former Miniſters tamely to brook the reſiſtance of his dependents to his will. It is, however, a ſtratagem that has been ſometimes practiſed by artful Generals, ſecretly to excite that mutiny among their troops, which they muſt appear to check; and by this means enjoy the pleaſure of ſeeing an obnoxious country pillaged, while they throw the blame of the plunder on the licentiouſneſs of the ſoldiers. It is alſo a maxim of Cunning, "In things that are tender and "unpleaſing, it is good to break the ice by "ſome whoſe words are of leſs weight*." To enjoy the pleaſure without incurring the blame of revenge, is no mean refinement in vindictive policy. The debate on the Prince of Wales's affairs ſeemed the *Saturnalia* of the Miniſter's majority: they were ſet free for the occaſion, and they abuſed their freedom

* Lord Bacon's Eſſay 22d of Cunning. The concluſion of this incomparable eſſay is very worthy of remark: But theſe ſmall wares and petty points of cunning are infinite; and it were a good deed to make a liſt of them; for that nothing doth more hurt in a ſtate than that cunning men paſs for wiſe.

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with ſomething of that inſolence which is the uſual fruit of ſuch emancipations. Men who, during their whole lives, had never known any opinion but that of the Firſt Lord of the Treaſury for the time being, began, for the firſt time, to ſpeak the language of purity, public frugality, untameable probity, and ſturdy independence. They "affected the "moſt aſtoniſhing prudery, both moral and "political*." Thoſe who "had ſo often "ſouſed overhead and ears into the deepeſt "and dirtieſt pits of corruption †," aſſumed all of a ſudden the ſternneſs of inexorable and incorruptible patriots. The diſtreſſes of the Prince of Wales furniſhed the happy occaſion for venality to expiate her ſins, for ſervility to gain the character of independence, and for conſtant public profuſion to aſſume the diſguiſe of a faithful ſteward, and a jealous guardian of the public purſe. Prodigality herſelf became frugal, and confidence ſuſpicious to haraſs the feelings, expoſe the diſtreſſes, magnify the foibles, and degrade the character of the Prince of Wales. Millions upon millions might, on every other purpoſe, be voted without debate, and expended with-

* Thoughts on the Cauſes of the preſent Diſcontents.
† Ibid. ibid.

out inquiry. But on this ſubject alone theſe devoted ſupporters began to debate, to inquire, to watch, to ſuſpect, and controul. The ineſtimable aſcendant of the Miniſter *ſeemed*, on this ſubject, gone.

In ſpeaking of this myſterious, though not altogether unintelligible ſcene, no one will underſtand me as alluding to thoſe gentlemen who are in the *habit* of watching with jealouſy over the expenditure of the public money. I may lament what I think an injudicious application of their general principle to the preſent ſubject; but it is impoſſible for me to condemn the principle itſelf. Jealouſy of public expence is that peculiar virtue which, above all others, *ought* to characterize a Houſe of Commons. Even the exceſs of this virtue might be pardoned, if it were only on account of its being a vice of ſuch rare occurrence in latter times. I ſpeak only of thoſe occaſional patriots who reſerve the well-huſbanded ſtock of their provident frugality for the public to let looſe on the Prince of Wales, and on him alone.

We ſhall better underſtand the nature of theſe harſh proceedings in Parliament, if we conſider with ſome attention the characters of genuine

genuine and counterfeit economy. Genuine economy (I ſpeak of it as it is to be exerciſed on the revenue and expence of a nation) is like almoſt all other conſiderable virtues, unpretending and unboaſtful. It is uniform and impartial in its regard to all the branches of public expenditure, proportioning its care to the magnitude of the ſum to be ſaved; to the degree in which the waſte is ſyſtematic or accidental, and to the injury which may ariſe from the expence to the other objects of public ſervice. This unaffected and diſintereſted economy prefers principles to details of retrenchment; dreads corrupt more than uſeleſs expenditure; never makes a parade of comparatively trivial ſavings for the ſake of duping the vulgar; never ſelects individuals merely becauſe they are powerleſs for the ſubject of paltry reform; and never ſhrinks from encountering gigantic abuſes, only becauſe thoſe who have the diſtribution of power and profit are intereſted in their preſervation. The quality of economy, which, when it is confined to its original ſphere of individual conduct, is only an uſeful and reſpectable exerciſe of diſcretion for the attainment of private happineſs, becomes, when it is thus applied to the affairs of nations, ſo ennobled by the greatneſs of its object, that it

has ever been juſtly conſidered as one of the higheſt parts of civil prudence and of public virtue. The ſole temptation that ſeduces men to the practice of hypocriſy is, that they may enjoy the praiſe without being embarraſſed with the reſtraints of true virtue. *Francis Charteris* would not have given a farthing for virtue, but he would have given ten thouſand pounds for a character. This is the univerſal difference between real and affected excellence; and the diſtinction is no where more conſpicuous than between genuine and ſpurious public frugality. Counterfeit economy proportions its anxiety not to the ſum to be ſaved, but to the tranſient popularity to be gained by the ſaving; makes a pompous diſplay of miſerable retrenchment in petty eſtabliſhments, which chance to be obnoxious, that public attention may be diverted from the corrupt and monſtrous gains of the great and powerful; prefers retrenchment in detail to reform by principle, becauſe the operation of the latter is both ſilent and effectual; while the ſudden, though trivial, effect of the latter dazzles the eyes of the credulous multitude, and leaves undiminiſhed the perennial ſource of prodigality and corruption. This vaunting and empirical frugality ſeizes one very occaſion where the dextrous oſten-

oſtentation of rigorous retrenchments in trifles may give ſafety and impunity to a ſyſtem of general profuſion. Its object, like that of all other hypocriſy, is wholly to diſpenſe with the reality of that virtue whoſe likeneſs it aſſumes.

Which of theſe two ſorts of economy was diſplayed by the friends of the Miniſter in the parliamentary diſcuſſion of the Prince of Wales's affairs, it requires very little ſagacity to determine. His debts, though conſiderable, are probably inferior to the tolerated waſte of a ſingle campaign; they had no relation to any comprehenſive ſyſtem of economy which ſhould regulate and limit future expence; they could, by no poſſibility, become the inſtrument of that corruption which pervades, debaſes, taints, and palſies every branch of the public ſervice. They were a ſecondary matter in the eye of that true economy, of which the character is ſimplicity, and the object uſefulneſs. They were, therefore, ſeized upon with avidity by that pretended economy, of which the principle is falſehood, and the object deluſive oſtentation. Loan jobbers, contractors, treaſury ſecretaries, found an eaſy opportunity of redeeming their character, and protecting their ill-gotten

gains

gains from inquiry by an affectation of ſevere frugality towards his Royal Highneſs.

——————*Quæ ſibi quiſque timebat,*
Unius in miſeri exitium converſa tulere.

I have thus far ſpoken generally of the ſpirit and temper of the proceedings in Parliament concerning the Prince's debts, which I cannot help numbering amongſt the moſt impolitic and dangerous that ever were admitted into an aſſembly of legiſlators, and among the moſt ungenerous and indecent that ever diſgraced a ſociety of gentlemen. I proceed to conſider the ſubject more in detail, and ſhall begin by venturing to affirm, that the exiſtence of theſe embarraſſments is chiefly to be aſcribed to that impolitic parſimony with which his Royal Highneſs's eſtabliſhment was firſt limited and ſtinted. It is difficult to determine, upon any general principle, what ought to be the income of a Prince of Wales. Whoever has a true regard for the dignity of the Crown, and no longer deſires to ſee any Heir-apparent at the mercy of Miniſters and miniſterial majorities, muſt wiſh to ſee that income fixed and rendered invariable by law. Policy, dignity, economy, all combine to make us deſire that a Prince of Wales ſhould

no

no longer be a dependant on the precarious bounty of a Miniſter. The influence of the Treaſury is great enough, without comprehending the Heir-apparent to the Crown. But until that deſirable object be obtained, we have one principle of public prudence to guide us in the aſcertainment of this income. As long as the ſtate and ſplendour of the Magiſtrate ſhall continue to be thought (as it hitherto has been by all wiſe men) a mild and powerful aid to the authority of the law, it ſeems but reaſonable that a Prince of Wales ſhould be enabled to maintain a rank and dignity, at leaſt, equal to that of the firſt ſubjects in the kingdom. It is the genius of a free government, that the ſplendour of its magiſtrates, which is but the reflected majeſty of the people themſelves, ſhould not be eclipſed by that of any private citizens. The ſuperiority of the ſtate, of the laws, of the magiſtrates over the citizen, ought to be conſpicuous even in the moſt trivial circumſtances, and to ſtrike the ſenſes and imagination, as well as to impreſs the underſtanding. The Majeſty of the Commonwealth herſelf is diſplayed in the grandeur of the public works, the magnificence of her public edifices, and the ſplendour of her public officers. It would be the groſſeſt of all errors in policy

to

to eſtabliſh an abrupt tranſition from poverty, as an Heir-apparent, to ſtate and dignity as a King. A prince deſigned for ſupreme magiſtracy muſt, in every part of his life, be ſurrounded by that exterior which is neceſſary to awe the multitude. He muſt never be in that ſituation of poverty, which but too ſurely fills them with contempt. They muſt never be previouſly prepared to deſpiſe him. The majeſty of the Sovereign muſt (to preſerve his own dignity) be imparted to thoſe who ſurround him. It muſt diminiſh as the connexion recedes by imperceptible ſhades of difference, and at length, in the remoteneſs of that connexion, be inſenſibly blended with the claims of the general body of citizens. But a harſh break, a ſudden interruption, are repugnant to the order of our natural feelings, and therefore inconſiſtent with the maxims of ſound policy.

This ſort of reaſoning, though it will be very difficult for any man who approves a monarchical form of Government to contravert its juſtice, only leads us to a general and looſe inference; and for the ſake of more preciſion we may aſſume it as another principle, that the income of a Prince of Wales ought

ought to be equal to that which Princes of Wales in former times have generally enjoyed, and by *equal*, I muſt of couſe be underſtood to mean, not a ſum of money nominally equal, but an income which will procure the ſame, comforts and maintain the ſame dignity. In a ſingle inſtance, indeed, unreaſonable profuſion or capricious parſimony might make the income too great or too little; but that in which ſeveral caſes coincide is likely to be a reaſonable ſtandard.

From the reſtoration to the acceſſion of the Houſe of Hanover, there exiſted no Prince of Wales, unleſs the infant ſon of James II. In this interval the wine and poſt-office duties computed at 104,000l. were ſettled on the Duke of York preſumptive heir to the Crown, and ſoon after the revolution 50,000l. per annum, were ſettled on the Prince and Princeſs of Denmark. Examples of more ancient times might ſeem to be drawn from circumſtances ſo unlike the preſent as to be inapplicable to the caſe before us*. We are, there-

* It may, however, be incidentally remarked that James I. in the year 1619, ſettled on his ſon Charles Prince of Wales 20,897l. "over and above the lands," &c. Anderſon's Hiſt. Com. Vol. II. p. 280. The whole ordinary

therefore, confined to the precedents of George II. and of Frederic Prince of Wales. In comparing theſe examples with the preſent, all that is to be aſſumed is, that the expenditure of an Heir Apparent continues the ſame, and that the Engliſh nation is ſtill able to defray the expence of that monarchical form of Government which they have choſen.

dinary income of that monarch appears to have been 450,000l. Sinclair's Hiſt. Reven. Part I. p. 145. So that a *twenty-ſecond part* of the whole revenue of the ſtate, was then thought a juſt proportion to be appropriated for the honourable ſupport of a Prince of Wales. Let this be compared with the ſtate of things in 1786. The ſupplies of that year amounted to 13,420,962l. The income of the Prince was 50,000l. which is a ſum leſs than the *two hundred and ſixtieth part* of the whole national income! The revenue of the Prince of Wales in 1786, was therefore *eleven times leſs* in compariſon with that of the public, than the revenue of his predeceſſor in 1619. To which we may add, that in the year 1624, (See Anderſon, Vol. II. p. 308.) the average price of land was twelve years purchaſe. In 1786 thirty years purchaſe. So that according to this computation, the important part of the national ſtock which conſiſts in land, was in 1786 conſiderably *more than double in value* to what it had been in 1619. The value of the land in England, was according to the calculation of Dr. Davenant, in 1600, ſeventy-two millions, in 1688, two hundred and fifty-two millions, (Davenant's Diſcourſes on Revenue and Trade, Part II. Diſc. I.) In theſe eighty-eight years it had more than trebled. There ſeems no reaſon to ſuppoſe that the progreſs has been arreſted altogether in more modern times.

The

The firſt of theſe aſſumptions is a fact about which there can be ſcarce any difference of opinion, and whoever diſputes the ſecond is bound in conſiſtency to propoſe a revolution in the Government. A reduction of the Prince's expence will not ſatisfy the objection. It extends to a ſubverſion of the monarchy. But with thoſe who carry their views to ſuch a ſubverſion, I have at preſent no controverſy. I am bold enough to take it for granted that the Britiſh Conſtitution is worth preſerving, and I now only argue with thoſe who hold that principle in common with myſelf.

On the acceſſion of George I. an hundred thouſand pounds a year were ſettled on George II. then Prince of Wales. To determine whether the late or preſent income of the Prince, be ſubſtantially equal to that of his great grandfather, we muſt conſider both the comparative ability of the nation, and the comparative expences of an Heir-apparent. It is not very eaſy, but it is fortunately not very neceſſary, to make this compariſon with rigid and abſolute exactneſs. There are not wanting materials for ſuch a general comparative eſtimate as will be ſufficient for our purpoſe. I am aware that many points reſpecting the progreſs of our national wealth, have been conteſted with zeal and acrimony during

the laſt thirty years. But, I do not mean to approach, far leſs to enter, the labyrinths of calculation, in which theſe contending ſpeculators have involved themſelves, and bewildered their readers. It is ſufficient for me that the moſt deſponding of them, though they have diſputed the extent of that progreſs, have ſcarce ventured to deny that it was real and conſiderable. The neceſſary augmentation of capital by accumulation, the encreaſing and irreſiſtible command of that vaſt and augmenting capital over induſtry; the natural and inevitable progreſs of art and ſkill, ſeconded by all the reſources of progreſſive ſcience, are cauſes which ſo powerfully tend to augment our national wealth, that the moſt ſhameful political miſmanagement and the greateſt public calamities can ſcarce reſiſt their effect. The internal tranquillity enjoyed by almoſt all the nations of Europe, the encreaſing refinement and luxury of all orders of men in that favoured region of the globe; the growth of a great civilized empire in Ruſſia; the converſion of the moſt deſolate ſolitudes and ſavage wilderneſſes of America into fertile and populous countries, increaſed the demand for our commodities beyond meaſure, in all our ancient markets, and created millions of new conſumers of the productions

ductions of Britiſh ſkill and induſtry. Every circumſtance that can favour the augmentation of wealth in an individual merchant, or manufacturer, or in a commercial nation co-operated during the whole of the eighteenth century in behalf of Great Britain. Our capital was accumulating, our induſtry was becoming more ingenious, our enterprize more bold, the demand for our productions was increaſing, and the number of our cuſtomers was augmented.

* The moſt certain means which we poſſeſs of aſcertaining the comparative wealth of a nation at different periods, is the compariſon of the extent of its commerce, and the value of its lands. Let us try the comparative ability of Great Britain to afford a competent and honourable ſupport to the Prince

* Much of this rapidly encreaſing wealth is juſtly to be aſcribed to the ſecurity enjoyed under a free and admirable ſyſtem of Government; much, doubtleſs, to the ſkill and enterprize of private individuals; much alſo to the energy which freedom beſtows on every people who poſſeſs that invaluable bleſſing; ſomething to the reputation and honour which commerce juſtly enjoys in this country; a great part to favourable circumſtances in the ſituation and progreſs of foriegn nations; but ſcarcely any part whatſoever to the ſuperior wiſdon and policy of ſtateſmen, who have ſo often and ſo abſurdly preſumed to arrogate to themſelves the merit of being the authors of national proſperity.

of

of Wales in 1715, and in 1786, or 1795, by both theſe ſtandards. The value of Britiſh manufactures exported in the year 1715 amounted to* - £. 5,128,818

The value of Britiſh manufactures exported in 1785 to - 10,977,728

in 1792 to - 17,449,614

So that Great Britain was, with reſpect to this important ſource of her wealth more than *twice* richer in 1785, and more than *thrice* richer in 1792, than in 1715, when ſhe ſettled an income of 100,000l. a year on the Prince of Wales.

The whole value of cargoes exported by Great Britain in the year 1715 amounted to† - £. 7,696,573

in 1785 to - 15,762,593

in 1792 to - 23,674,316

So that whether we confine ourſelves to the exportation of Britiſh manufactures, or whether we extend our views to the general exports of the kingdom, we find the ſame reſult that the nation was more than *twice*

* See Chalmers's Eſtimate, Intro. p. 36. edit. 1794. As it is impoſſible to ſuppoſe that any writer would preſume to give a falſe ſtatement of Cuſtom-houſe returns, in the face of ſo eaſy a detection, I ſhall reſt on the authority of Mr. Chalmers in theſe calculations.

† Chalmers's Eſtimate, p. 207.

richer at the ſecond of theſe periods, and more than *thrice* richer at the third, than ſhe had been at the firſt, when ſhe thought herſelf able to allow an annual income of 100,000l. to the Heir-apparent to the Crown. Conſiderable diſputes have taken place reſpecting the amount of the rental of the kingdom. It was eſtimated by Gregory King*, about the beginning of the preſent century, at thirteen millions. It was eſtimated by Mr. Pitt in February 1796, at twenty-five millions. It was eſtimated by Mr. Morgan at eighteen millions. I ſhall not examine the accuracy of theſe contending eſtimates. It is ſufficient for my argument, that if Mr. Pitt's eſtimate be correct, the rental of the kingdom has nearly *doubled*, and if Mr. Morgan's be more accurate, it has increaſed almoſt one-half during the preſent century. To which may be added, that there have been ſeveral millions more ſpecie coined in this kingdom in the thirty-ſix years of his preſent Majeſty's reign, than in the century which elapſed between the reſtoration and the demiſe of King George II. A moſt important fact, as it relates to both

* The MSS. of this celebrated political arithmetician are, I believe, preſerved in the Britiſh Muſeum: but I have taken this calculation on the authority of Dr. Davenant.

branches

branches of the preſent argument; as it affects both the ability of the nation and the need of the Prince, as it indicates the growing wealth of the country, and as it lowers the real value of money, and increaſes the nominal price of neceſſaries and the comforts of life.

Every circumſtance indeed which increaſes the wealth of a country muſt diminiſh the value of a given income. Every proof of our growing national opulence is, therefore, an argument that what was an adequate income in a particular rank eighty years ago, can be no longer equal to the ſupport of the ſame rank. But there are not wanting more direct and poſitive proofs of this truth. A work has lately appeared full of ſerious, melancholy inſtruction, reſpecting the condition of the labouring poor in this great and opulent country. From accurate calculations made by the author of that work, it appears that the price of the neceſſaries of life has doubled, or nearly doubled, ſince the middle of the preſent century. The price of thoſe commodities which are ſubſervient to convenience, to luxury, and to ſplendour, has certainly at leaſt kept pace with that of articles of the firſt neceſſity. There are even

many

many reaſons for ſuppoſing that its progreſs has been greater and more rapid; what is ſtill more important, the taſtes and habits of expenſive life have increaſed in a far greater proportion. From theſe ſimple ſtatements it clearly follows, that the Prince of Wales in the year 1785 *needed* at leaſt double the income enjoyed by his great grandfather in 1715 to maintain the ſame rank; and that the nation poſſeſſed double the means of granting him that income. But as George II. was married in 1715, let us deduct 80,000l. (far too great a deduction) for the difference between the eſtabliſhment of a ſingle and a married prince. This will leave us 120,000l. as the ſum which ought to have been annually ſettled on his Royal Highneſs, even when ſingle, to make his income *ſubſtantially* equal to that of George II. His revenue was, however, in 1783 ſettled at 50,000l.; it was increaſed in 1787 to 60,000l. There was, therefore, an annual deficiency for four years of 70,000l., and for eight years more of 60,000l., which of itſelf, without making any allowance for the impoſition and miſmanagement, which are the inſeparable attendants of an inadequate income, will be ſufficient to account for the accumulation of

that debt which has raiſed ſuch a clamour throughout the nation.

	£.	s.
Deficiency of 70,000l. for four years — —	280,000	0
Deficiency of 60,000l. for eight years — —	480,000	0
	760,000	0
Debt incurred previous to the 6th of July 1786, (of which 53,105l. for buildings at Carlton-Houſe) -	161,110	10
Debt incurred before April, 1795, about - - - - -	630,000	0
	791,110	10
But as Carlton-Houſe is now made public property, we muſt in juſtice deduct all the debt contracted on that account - - - - -	190,000,	0
Remaining debt	601,110	10

A ſum conſiderably leſs than the deficiency which

which has been pointed out. But let me grant that I may have over-rated what ought to have been the original eſtabliſhment of the Prince of Wales, and that it ſhould have been 100,000l. as propoſed by Mr. Fox in the cabinet in 1783. There will then be

	£.
A deficiency of 50,000l. for four years — — —	200,000
A deficiency of 40,000l. for eight years — — —	320,000
Total deficiency	520,000

The mere accumulation of intereſt will account for the ſurplus of the debt over this ſum. From all theſe details it plainly appears that the original income of the Prince in 1783 was inadequate, that the augmentations in 1787 and 1795 were inſufficient, and that this inadequacy was the cauſe of the debts which followed. His Royal Highneſs was induced, upon the faith of the country and the conſtitution, to believe it his duty to ſupport the ſame rank and ſplendour which had been maintained by his predeceſſors in former times. He was, like them, the firſt ſubject in the country. He was, like them,

Heir-apparent to the Crown. The Nation, when they recognized theſe high privileges, ſeemed to tell him that he was entitled to the ſame enjoyments, as a compenſation for the performance of the ſame duties. But thoſe who acted on the part of the public betrayed him. They placed him in a ſituation of equal ſtate expence, without granting him equal means of maintaining that ſtate, or defraying that expence. The exceſs of the natural expence of his ſituation over his income gave riſe to debts, which, inſtead of aſcribing, as they ought to have done, to their own unjuſt and ſhort-ſighted parſimony, they made a topic of reproach and clamour againſt His Royal Highneſs. The natural expence of every ſituation is that ſum which thoſe who fill it in general ſpend. The Prince of Wales was placed in the ſame ſituation, and expoſed to the ſame expence, with his predeceſſors. His income was *nominally* one half, and *really*, perhaps, about one fourth, of what former princes in the ſame ſituation had enjoyed. Debts were the inevitable conſequence, and into thoſe debts (I repeat it) his Royal Highneſs was ſeduced and betrayed by bad faith in thoſe who conducted the affairs of the public *. He was

* I have forborne to argue the caſe of Frederic Prince of

not forewarned that the Nation no longer desired magnificence in their princes,—that they were now become either unable or unwilling to maintain the splendour of a monarchy. The rights which were conferred on him, the dignity with which he was clothed, the very titles by which he was addressed, all spoke to him a directly opposite language. His expence has only been that of his situation and that of his predecessors. He has incurred more debts, because his means have been less. For all the inquietude

of Wales, because whatever I could say would be only a repetition of what I have already said of his father. One fact, however, relating to Prince Frederic is too remarkable to be omitted. King George II. himself made a calculation of the expence of that Prince's household; and, after all the deductions which ingenious parsimony, whetted and sharpened by resentment, could make, he was only able to reduce it to 63,000l. per annum. (See Chandler's Debates of the Commons, Vol. IV. p. 327). We cannot exactly calculate the allowance to be made for subtractions made only by the arithmetic of hostility; but we know that this estimate was made 60 years ago, when the trade of Great Britain was about one half, and the price of the necessaries of life not much more than one half, of what they are at present. This estimate, we are told by Mr. Pulteney, was confined to the mere expence of the establishment. It left nothing for amusement, for charity, or for munificence; and it was afterwards tacitly confessed to be erroneous by his Majesty himself, when he consented to raise the income of his son to 100,000l.

and vexation to which theſe debts have ſubjected him; for all the humiliation to which they may have expoſed him in the eye of the public; from all the danger which may ariſe from the impolitic diſcuſſion and malicious miſtatement of them to this monarchy and this country; the thriftleſs and improvident parſimony of thoſe who unwiſely and unjuſtly ſtinted his revenue, is alone reſponſible.

It may, indeed, be ſaid, that the taxes of this country are now ſo much greater than they were in former times, that a Prince of Wales is not to expect the ſame ſplendid revenue. I might anſwer with Mr. Pulteney*, that this argument does not apply excluſively, or even peculiarly, to the income of the Prince, but leads to a proportionate reduction of all our public eſtabliſhments. I might anſwer with Mr. Fox, that if our burdens have increaſed, ſo alſo have our means. I ſhall content myſelf with a ſtill plainer anſwer. The greater part of theſe taxes, all thoſe which are laid upon conſumption, affect the Prince equally with every other ſubject in the kingdom. They increaſe his neceſſities,—

* Chandler's Debates *ubi ſupra.*

they

they inhance the price of every article which he conſumes; they are partially the cauſe which makes a larger nominal income neceſſary for him than was beſtowed on former princes. But, as if it had not been enough to inveigle his Royal Highneſs into expences to which his income was inadequate, it was thought neceſſary to betray him into a promiſe that he ſhould perform an impoſſibility, by maintaining his dignity and ſtate upon a revenue unequal to the object. I ſpeak of the promiſe announced to the Houſe of Commons by his Majeſty's meſſage in 1787. The hiſtory of that promiſe is now well known. It has been explained in Parliament by a perſon whoſe teſtimony no man who values his own character will be hardy enough to queſtion. (See Debrett's Parliamentary Regiſter, Vol. 42. p. 570). It appears to have been a promiſe ingeniouſly procured to ſerve a temporary purpoſe, and lightly granted without any knowledge of its import. It ſeems, indeed, little better than an abuſe of language to beſtow on ſuch a haſty, inconſiderate, and almoſt undeſigned, engagement the ſolemn name and binding authority of a promiſe. To conſider it in that light, was at beſt to treat the Prince of Wales with all the rigorous exactneſs of a ſorry and pitiful chicane.

chicane. It reſembled more the miſerable arts by which a rapacious pettifogger ſtrips his unfortunate victims, than the fairneſs, generoſity, and honour, which ought to prevail in tranſactions between the legiſlature of a great nation and the Prince who is one day deſtined to be their ſovereign. In private life we ſhould conſider that father as having betrayed the moſt extreme and odious ſeverity, who regarded his ſon's forgetfulneſs of ſuch an unguarded engagement in any other light than that of a venial indiſcretion: we ſhould condemn him ſtill farther, if he had extorted ſuch a promiſe (if it deſerves the name) from his ſon in a moment of confuſion and embarraſſment, with a full knowledge that to fulfill it was impoſſible. We ſhould conſider the act of violating the promiſe indeed as imprudence, but the act of extorting it as circumvention; our ſlight diſapprobation of the imprudence would be loſt in our honeſt indignation at the injuſtice. I lament the neglect of any engagement, however frivolous, by thoſe whoſe characters ought to be the pureſt and the higheſt: but I condemn the act by which this engagement was procured, the ſeverity with which a literal compliance ſeemed to be expected, and the parade with which the omiſſion has been diſplayed

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to the public as the violation of a ſolemn and ſacred promiſe. I transfer my diſapprobation, from the levity of unguarded ſtipulation, to the perfidious dexterity of thoſe who obtained it, and to the malignity and injuſtice of thoſe who have exaggerated the force of ſuch a promiſe, and magnified the guilt of ſuch a violation. It may be thought that I have dwelt too long on this ſubject, rather than that I have omitted any intereſting part of it. Yet there is one topic of declamation which muſt not be paſſed over in abſolute ſilence. The wants and diſtreſſes of the poor have been dragged into this diſcuſſion. This is in reality to bring under review, in a new form, the general ſubject of the fitneſs and uſefulneſs of the Britiſh Conſtitution. If that form of government, with all the expences which are neceſſary for its maintenance, be not upon the whole uſeful to the poor, it is not uſeful to the majority of that people for whoſe benefit *only* it purports to exiſt. If the ſplendour of our King, the magnificence of our Princes, the expence of all our extenſive eſtabliſhments, be not greatly and certainly, though ſometimes indirectly, ſubſervient to the protection and happineſs of the humbleſt cottager in the kingdom, our anceſtors have choſen ill in

eſtabliſhing this conſtitution, and our zeal for its preſervation is unreaſonable. But if the authority and dignity of the King be the great ſpring of the vigour of thoſe protecting laws which, though they cannot reſcue all men from proverty, confer on them all ſecurity; if that great majority of mankind, who, by the immutable order of nature, in all ſtates and forms of ſociety, are excluded from wealth, be better ſecured by this expenſive government than by any other, in the enjoyment of the fruit of their labours; if the throne, as every friend of the Britiſh Conſtitution muſt regard it, be the bulwark of the cottage; then the contribution of the pooreſt individual is but the price which he pays for his quiet, his ſafety, and his well being. The benefits which that conſtitution confers are diffuſed too widely to be diſtinctly perceived by each individual, who often feels leſs ſtrongly the ſilent protection which the law affords him, than the calamities inſeparable to the condition of man, which no human law can cure. But they reſemble, in this reſpect, all the other great and general bleſſings of nature and of ſociety, which are too common to be ſufficiently valued till we have the misfortune to loſe them. Common places on the miſeries of the poor do not always

always iſſue from thoſe who have the keeneſt ſenſibility to their ſufferings. They are often the hypocritical declamations of baſe and cruel impoſtors, who labour to convert helpleſs ignorance into an engine of unprincipled ambition. The application of theſe common places to the preſent ſubject muſt either be made upon the ſuppoſition, that the expence of the Prince of Wales have greatly and exceſſively ſurpaſſed the demands of that rank, which the conſtitution has impoſed upon him the duty of ſupporting; or that the conſtitution itſelf is burdenſome and oppreſſive to the people. The firſt of theſe ſuppoſitions I have already confuted: the ſecond I do not here undertake to confute at all. Thoſe who condemn the whole conſtitution muſt, to be conſiſtent with themſelves, blame every expence that ariſes out of it. I, for the preſent, aſſume its general excellence, becauſe my preſent controverſy is not with the open enemies, but with the miſtaken or pretended friends, of the Britiſh Conſtitution.

I have thus examined the juſtice and generoſity of that treatment which the Prince of Wales experienced in his pecuniary tranſactions with the public. The full effect of that treatment was ſoon after conſpicuous in

the courſe of another matter, which I am now reluctantly and painfully, but irreſiſtably, compelled to conſider. Miſunderſtandings between thoſe who are united by the cloſeſt and deareſt of all ties, are in all ranks of life a matter of ſuch peculiar delicacy and ſacredneſs, that the rank of the perſons, and the intereſt the public have in their character, can but ſlightly aggravate the impropriety and indecency of making ſuch differences the ſubject of general diſcuſſion. But juſtice to a character injured and defamed muſt prevail over all the ſcruples and ſtruggles of delicacy. When ſlander is publicly circulated it muſt be publicly confuted. Falſehood muſt not be allowed an undiſturbed monopoly of public opinions. We muſt purſue malice and calumny to detection, even before ſo unfit a tribunal as the public, when they drag forth theſe domeſtic calamities from the ſhade and covert of that privacy where they ought for ever to have remained. Repugnance muſt give way to duty. The generous delicacy, as well as the proud contempt felt by the innocent and virtuous, too often afford the ſlanderer an undiſputed victory. The ſhame of indelicate diſcloſure belongs to the calumniator who firſt ſet the example. The neceſſity of a juſt defence will exempt me from

blame,

blame, in following him wherever I am led by the duty of confuting and detecting falſehood.

The marriages of Kings and Princes differ in many important particulars from thoſe of private men. They are not connexions of previous affection or even of previous acquaintance. They are arranged on mere principles of public convenience, and the feelings, the caprices, the weakneſſes of the individuals, muſt yield to national intereſt. Theſe great perſonages pay the full price of their elevation above other men. They muſt be content for the moſt part to live in ſociety without friendſhip, and in marriage without love. Faithful adviſers and affectionate ſervants they may have, but as they have no equals, they rarely can have any friends. Their connexions in marriage are too important to the public to be truſted to the impulſe of their own private feelings. They are devoted for the general intereſt. They muſt liſten to no voice but that of a harſh and imperious policy. They are expoſed to the hazard of that incurable repugnance in character, temper, and manners, which often ſubſiſts even among minds equally virtuous, and which in private life, the diſcernment of

of a prudent man may avoid in the moſt cold and mercenary connexions. They ſacrifice to public welfare all thoſe affections which make duty ceaſe to be painful. As all elevation of rank is only a truſt for the public, and as the diſtinctions of a well-ordered commonwealth are founded only on common utility, ſo the higheſt rank impoſes the ſevereſt duties, and exacts the moſt painful ſacrifices. The power and ſplendor which, purely for the ſake of ſociety, are beſtowed on Princes, are not the only compenſation which mankind owe, and which they generally pay to them, for the excluſion of thoſe ſentiments which are the chief conſolations of human life. They are entitled to a more liberal indulgence for thoſe miſunderſtandings and faults, which are in their ſituation ſometimes inevitable, and which are ſo frequent in the moſt promiſing and flattering plans of domeſtic ſociety. Let it alſo be conſidered, that the families of Princes are often ſurrounded and beſieged by Cabals, who ſeek to build their own importance on the quarrels of their ſuperiors, by flattering their ſelf-partiality, by awakening their jealouſy, by alarming their pride, and by exaſperating their reſentment. An ambitious flatterer gains favour by paying court to the paſſions of the moment.

ment. He gains conſequence by being made a confident and an agent in domeſtic miſunderſtandings, and he poſſeſſes himſelf perhaps of ſecrets, which may render him for ever formidable. If he ſucceeds ſo far as to provoke an unwiſe and hazardous appeal to the public feelings, he may blend his own name in the eyes of the world, with that of the moſt conſpicuous and diſtinguiſhed perſons. He advances his intereſt by the quarrel, and he gratifies his vanity by thoſe unfortunate meaſures which make the breach irreparable. It is unfortunately not neceſſary to inform any reader, that a cruel miſunderſtanding has embittered the domeſtic life of the Prince of Wales. I have already ſtated ſome of the cauſes which peculiarly tend to engender and to aggravate ſuch diſputes in the moſt exalted families, the conſideration of which has led mankind to view many of the foibles of Princes, with an indulgence, not founded on ſuperſtitious reverence for the ſuperiority of their rank, but in a juſt and reaſonable regard to the difficulties of their ſituation. Both the parties in this unfortunate miſunderſtanding are entitled to the benefit of this indulgence. If the vindication of the Prince of Wales had required any reflections on the illuſtrious lady, whoſe name has been dragged

forward

forward by miſguided advocates from the ſhade of dignified privacy, the cauſe of his Royal Highneſs muſt have been left to champions of ſpirit and feelings, very different from mine. The claims of her youth and her ſex, the ſentiments of hoſpitality, the regard due to my own character, would have kept me aloof from ſuch ignoble warfare. From what I have heard of his Royal Highneſs, I am convinced, that even in the moment of reſentment, his good ſenſe, his generoſity, and his pride, would recoil from a mode of defence, in which he himſelf could not be vindicated without ſacrificing the dignity of his family. But, without attacking the Princeſs of Wales, one may lament her conduct. Mature experience, and diſintereſted wiſdom, if ſhe had been fortunate enough to find them amongſt her adviſers, would have ſuggeſted other counſels than thoſe which ſhe has unhappily followed. She might have been told, that mildneſs is the weapon of a woman; that meek ſubmiſſion, eloquent patience, ſtudious concealment even of wrongs, tenderneſs, aſſiduous, without being importunate, and prudence animated by that affection which it guides, are the arts with which nature has benevolently armed and protected the weaker ſex. It requi-

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red little boldneſs in her counſellors to have told her, that domeſtic breaches become irreparable when they become public; that the purity of the female character is too delicate not to be ſoiled by the breath of popular rumour; that the ſanctity of marriage is polluted, and all hope of reinſpiring tenderneſs, or even of reſtoring confidence and mutual reſpect, is irrecoverably gone, when the frailties inſeparable from that cloſe and ſacred connection, are expoſed to the vulgar eye. Such adviſers might have inſtructed the youth and inexperience of her Royal Highneſs in the plain, but uſeful leſſon, that domeſtic ſuffering loſes all its dignity when it ceaſes to be ſilent and unobtruſive, and forfeits its beſt title to ſympathy, when it becomes clamorous and oſtentatious; that every ſhadow of an attempt to intereſt the public in her domeſtic quarrels, to appeal to them againſt her huſband, and to remove that veil which hides from them the tenderneſs, as well as the occaſional eſtrangements of wedded life, was inconſiſtent with that gentleneſs which became her as a woman, fatal to her repoſe as a wife, and repugnant to her honour as a Princeſs. But the greater part of the advice which is offered in the world, is better calculated for the profit of the adviſer, than the

adviſed. Such counſels might have ſecured domeſtic quiet, if not domeſtic affection, to herſelf, reſpect to her family, and dignity to her character. But they were perhaps not ſo well adapted to advance the intereſt of thoſe who foment animoſities, for the ſake of exalting their own importance. Other counſels have prevailed, of which her Royal Highneſs may one day bitterly lament the fruits, without being able to repair the miſchief. If, indeed, in the courſe of this unfortunate miſunderſtanding, the Prince of Wales had been guilty of any rudeneſs, of any unmanly inſult, even of any ungentlemanly indecorum, towards his illuſtrious conſort, we ſhould pardon the indiſcretion into which ſhe might be betrayed, by juſt reſentment, and think only of the offences which had provoked it. Such offences have been imputed to his Royal Highneſs; but they have been imputed only by calumny. The whiſpers of a private circle, the libels of nameleſs ſlanderers, the lie that circulates without a reſponſible author, the fictions and exaggerations, both of malignity and credulity, deſerve no better confutation than a poſitive contradiction. If it were neceſſary, it would be eaſy to prove by witneſſes, beyond all challenge, that theſe charges are ca-

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lumnies in the full extent and force of that term, both as it implies falſehood of aſſertion, and malignity of intention. It would be eaſy to prove, by the higheſt and moſt reſpectable teſtimony; by *teſtimony which has ſatisfied thoſe who were beſt qualified to examine the queſtion, and moſt intereſted in its fair deciſion*, that his Royal Highneſs has never loſt for a moment that amenity and urbanity and elegance which diſtinguiſh his manners; that he has been guilty of nothing impolite, nothing indecent, nothing ungenerous, far leſs any thing rude, or harſh, or inſolent; that if he has ſometimes indulged the weakneſſes of a man, he has never forgotten either the feelings of a man, or the demeanour of a gentleman. But it is not fit that ſuch witneſſes ſhould be introduced for ſuch a purpoſe. It would be unſeemly and indecent that they ſhould ſoil the purity of their honour, by entering the liſts with anonymous calumniators. The evidence of ſuch perſons has already acquitted the Prince of Wales, in the eyes of thoſe whoſe good opinion he is moſt diſpoſed and bound to cultivate. When any accuſer worthy of them ſhall appear againſt him, they are prepared with their teſtimony. Calumny is not to be honoured by ſuch a confutation.

In examining the probability or plauſibility of ſuch atrocious charges, the character of thoſe who are ſuppoſed to enjoy, in the higheſt degree, the confidence of his Royal Highneſs, is a conſideration of no ſmall weight. A huſband and a prince, capable of rudeneſs and brutality to a female, is not likely to have any friends left among men of virtue; far leſs can we ſuppoſe it probable, that the moſt confidential counſellor of ſuch a prince, ſhould be one of the men of the pureſt and proudeſt honour in the kingdom. Such aſſociations are unnatural and monſtrous. A man of honour recoils from the contagion of depravity, and a profligate prince ſhrinks from the authority of virtue. My Lord Moira is generally ſuppoſed to be among the chief adviſers of the Prince of Wales. There are few men who ſo nearly enjoy the unanimous applauſe of a public, divided on almoſt every other opinion and character, as that noble perſon. The dignity and generoſity of that antique military honour, which is the living principle of the character of a gentleman, are ſoftened in him by the mildneſs of good nature, tempered by the amenity of good manners, enriched by the diſcoveries of modern ſcience, and adorned by the elegance of ancient and modern

An effusion of Genius.

modern literature. He has preſerved the high ſpirit which was wont to diſtinguiſh a gentleman and a ſoldier, without any remnant of that fierceneſs and ignorance, which throw a ſhade of barbariſm over the maſculine virtue of ancient times. His honour has the proud and lofty features of thoſe ages, which we have the preſumption to deſpiſe, without having the ſpirit to equal; but his manners, his accompliſhments, his eloquence, are caſt in the beſt mould of the moſt refined periods. That noble pride, by which a virtuous man reveres virtue in himſelf, leads him alſo to love his own character in other minds, and to reſpect our common nature, on account of the excellence of which he feels it capable. It is thus that the honour of Lord Moira has invigorated his public and ſocial virtues; infuſing greater purity into juſtice, and greater delicacy into benevolence; diſplaying itſelf by generoſity towards his fellows in arms; by hoſpitality and liberality towards exiles; by commiſeration and conſtant effort for priſoners; and by an unſhaken zeal for thoſe guardian principles which protect the common rights of mankind. When perſons of high rank are animated to noble actions by a ſenſe of their dignity, without forgetting that their exalted

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ſtation is a poſt in which they are placed to watch over the intereſts of their fellow men; the order of ſociety is preſerved, and its objects are attained as far as human wiſdom can provide. It is a ſhallow and vulgar philoſophy which would degrade honour, under pretence of exalting virtue. Honour is not a principle diſtinct from virtue. It is a purer and more delicate virtue which governs the intercourſe of men of keener ſenſibility and more elegant accompliſhment, than the great body of mankind. Juſtice is neceſſary, and benevolence is uſeful to all men. All men regard the eſteem of thoſe with whom they live as an advantage. But refined minds have many apparently ſmall duties, aud many ſeemingly minute ſufferings, to which groſſer men are ſtrangers. It is the neceſſary effect of their refinement and cultivation, to extend the ſphere of their morality to many things, which, to common minds, are indifferent. Many reproaches, which the vulgar may ſafely deſpiſe, are to the better ſort, the blackeſt ſtain. The reverence which a man feels for himſelf, from the conſciouſneſs of excellence, the juſtice which obſerves the minute rights of others to reſpect to reputation and politeneſs, the ſympathy which prevents or ſoothes the

the ſlighteſt ſuffering of delicacy, of fancy, or even of caprice, which beſtows on important acts of ſubſtantial benevolence a new grace and charm, and which diffuſes a ſecret ſweetneſs over the common intercourſe of human life; and the fearful anxiety for the ſmalleſt blot on a character, which is placed ſo high as to attract the obſervation of mankind; theſe are the parts of that diſtinguiſhing ſentiment of well-formed and well-educated minds, which we call honour, which is the laſt fruit of cultivated virtue, the laſt refinement and perfection of the nature of man.* It is this lofty ſentiment which might have fitted Lord Moira equally to be an heroic baron of the Court of Edward III., or an accompliſhed gentleman of the reign of George III. In ſuch well-

* Some late writers have ſuppoſed that the principle of honour is peculiar to modern times. Mr. Hume, I remember, finds fault with Addiſon for putting a panegyric on honour in the mouth of a Roman. It might eaſily be ſhewn, if this were a place for the diſcuſſion, that theſe writers are greatly miſtaken. The ſyſtem of chivalry has perhaps ſtrengthened this ſentiment among the modern Europeans, and has certainly given it a peculiar form: but the ſeeds of the principle are in the nature of man, and they have at all times been matured and unfolded in civilized nations and exalted minds. The Greek and Roman writers abound with paſſages, which prove its vigour and activity among theſe renowned nations.

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born minds, the improvement of ſocial life poliſh, without enervating the rugged and high-minded virtues of our forefathers. Such men are more mild, without being leſs gallant, and more refined, but not leſs pure than their heroic anceſtors.

It is with reluctance that I quit ſuch a character as that of Lord Moira, to return to ſuch ungrateful and loathſome ſubjects, as baſeneſs and malignity, ſlander and ſcurrility. But the duty which I have impoſed on myſelf, obliges me to revert to theſe diſguſting topics. Thoſe vigilant enemies who had purſued the Prince of Wales, during every period of his life, ſoon availed themſelves of the unfortunate miſunderſtanding which embittered his domeſtic life. The public was deluged with libels againſt his character, ſome of which were of ſuch unparalleled extravagance, that they ought to be preſerved in the cabinet of the curious, as rare ſpecimens of human audacity and ſcurrility. Few of the London newſpapers can be entirely acquitted of having contributed to the circulation of theſe abominable calumnies; ſome perhaps from negligence; ſome from imprudence; ſome, probably, from a deſire to pay court to the malignant

curioſity of the moment, by the affectation of being familiarly acquainted with the reigning topic of faſhionable ſcandal. But it is very remarkable, that after the conductors of other papers had, from fatigue or ſhame, or conviction, either relinquiſhed the ſubject, or profeſſed their change of opinion; two papers ſhould have perſiſted, and ſhould ſtill continue to perſiſt, in this ſyſtem of ſlander, and that theſe two ſhould happen to be the papers which are univerſally believed to be protected and paid by the King's Miniſters. It would require ſomething more than ſimplicity to aſcribe this perſeverance to a peculiarly intractable ſpirit of proud and ſtubborn independence in the editors of theſe papers. *An Abyſſinian*, who had been a fortnight in London, would be laughed at, for attributing their conduct to an unconquerable indignation at vice. Nobody accuſes them of being infected with ſuch airy notions. They are well known to be influenced by more ſolid and ſubſtantial reaſons. It is impoſſible to ſuppoſe that they ſhould have perſevered in the publication of libels which were offenſive, or which were not known to be agreeable to their employers.

It is very difficult to believe that they

would have perſiſted in ſuch a courſe without inſtigation, without reward, without aſſurances of protection, and ſtrong hopes of impunity. It would be uncandid to aſcribe ſuch diſintereſted malice to any body of men. It would be ridiculous to expect ſuch unmanageable obſtinacy from mercenary writers. In plain Engliſh, the libels againſt the Prince of Wales muſt have been part of the ſtipulated labour, which they performed for thoſe who hire them. Impunity is an important conſideration to a libeller, and it muſt be owned that the libellers of the Prince of Wales had before their eyes a moſt encouraging proof, that there is at leaſt one perſon in Great Britain whoſe character the laws will neither protect nor avenge. The example of Mr. Miles was well calculated to animate his fellow-labourers in calumny. I have too proud a ſpirit to know ſuch a man as an equal, and I am in too humble a ſituation to employ him as an agent. I can, therefore, know nothing of his character but what I learn from general rumour, and from his own writings, which it is a much harder taſk to read than to refute. The firſt circumſtance which ſtrikes us, among the many particulars which this Gentleman has been pleaſed to diſcloſe of his own life, and probably

bably the moſt important in his own private calculation is, that he enjoys two penſions, one under his Majeſty's ſign manual, and one from the Treaſury. (Correſpondence with M. Le Brun, Appendix, p. 13.) He calls the income of theſe penſions "moderate." But that epithet is too vague to give us any exact idea of its amount. All that we can gueſs from his narrative is, that his income is leſs and ought to have been greater than that of Mr. Burke. The ſervice by which he carried theſe penſions were, he tells us "creditable, faithful, and acknowledged." The penſions were, he ſays, "dearly and honourably earned." As in the midſt of a pretty general uniformity, there are occaſionally conſiderable varieties in the moral taſte of mankind, I own I had ſome curioſity to know what thoſe ſervices were, on which Mr. Miles beſtowed theſe epithets of approbation and honour. He himſelf has ſatisfied this curioſity. I had only to overcome that repugnance to nonſenſe, which I had acquired in my youth, from the habit of reading ſome good authors of our own and of other countries and times. That repugnance being overcome, the writings of Mr. Miles himſelf were ſufficient to inform me what was the nature of thoſe ſervices, which

he calls, and perhaps Mr. Roſe thinks, "honourable." It appears from theſe writings that at leaſt as early as 1787, he was employed as a *Secret Agent* of the Britiſh Government in the Auſtrian Netherlands and the Biſhopric of Liege; that in 1788, he bribed foreign newſpapers to praiſe Mr. Pitt, (Correſpond. with Le Brun, Appendix, p. 29.) that in 1789, he betook himſelf to the more dignified, but ſomewhat leſs harmleſs, amuſement, of ſtimulating the people of thoſe countries to inſurrection, when a revolt had become uſeful to the views of the Courts of London and Berlin againſt Joſeph II. (ſee his Correſpondence with M. Fabry of Liege); that in 1790, finding the Netherlands too contracted a ſcene for his genius, he repaired to Paris, and for the information of his employers transformed himſelf into a Jacobin*. (Conduct of France towards Great Britain, p. 55.) From theſe facts one might ſuſpect that Mr. Miles was an "honourable" Gentleman who, in the plain, downright, homeſpun language of

* "I was a member of the popular ſocieties, and *regularly* attended the Jacobin Club." How laudably anxious Mr. Miles appears to eſtabliſh a title to his hire, by reminding his paymaſters of the aſſiduity and punctuality with which he performed his taſk!

our forefathers would be called a ſpy. He ſays, that his penſion is dearly earned. It would indeed be ſo to ſome men; but it ſurely cannot be ſo to him. There are, thank God, ſome who would conſider the ſacrifice of character, conſcience, and honour as too high a price for all the power and wealth in the world. But theſe men have a character to loſe, a conſcience to be wounded, and an honour to be ſtained. Mr. Miles may perhaps not entirely reſemble them in all theſe reſpects; and he certainly is not of their opinion, for he ſeem, to think that his own ſervices were moſt "honourable," and that a diſcarded ſpy has as ample claims on public gratitude, and may advance them with as much decency as a veteran ſoldier covered with wounds and with glory; or a magiſtrate who has grown grey in the adminiſtration of juſtice; or a ſtateſman who has promoted the welfare, the liberty, and the renown of a great commonwealth; or a man of genius whoſe writings honour his own country, and may for ever inſtruct, improve, and delight the whole race of man*. This is a ſmall ſpecimen

* One of the greateſt of poets has given us a moſt beautiful enumeration of thoſe who are eminently rewarded in the manſions of the juſt, for having deſerved well of human ſociety---

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men of the doctrines of the ſchool where Mr. Miles ſeems to have learned his moral philoſophy. There are indeed few philoſophers who have ſo conveniently adapted their theory and their practice, their feelings or their ſituations and their language, to their conduct as this very "honourable" Gentleman.

But theſe are not all the ſervices by which Mr. Miles has ſo dearly and honourably earned his penſion. It appears that this worthy perſon, early ſeized with a holy zeal for virtue, and utterly uninfluenced by any regard to the favours of the Treaſury, publiſhed a letter againſt the Prince of Wales, in the year 1784, under the ſignature of Neptune, in which he is pleaſed, with great civility, to inform the public, that the circle

Hic manus ob Patriam pugnando vulnera paſſi,
Quique ſacerdotes caſti dum vita manebat
Quique pii vates et Phœbo digna locati,
Inventes aut qui vitam excoluere per artes
Quique ſui memores alios fecere merendo.
Virg. Eneid. lib. 660, 664.

This great poet has not included ſpies in his enumeration. I dread the cenſure of men of taſte, for having degraded theſe incomparable lines by applying them to ſuch a ſubject. But they will pardon a writer employed on ſuch low themes, for ſometimes relieving his mind by the contemplation of ideas more congenial to it.

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of his Royal Highneſs's friends was a "pandæmonium*." Soon after the publication of that libel, he ſeems to have repaired on an honourable errand to the continent of Europe. No ſooner was he returned to England, than he recommenced his virtuous labours by a letter, in which he is ſo good as to ſay, that "vice felt herſelf honoured by the audacity as well as the atrociouſneſs" of the Prince of Wales. In 1795, Mr. Miles publiſhed a pamphlet, entitled "a letter to the Prince of Wales," which he is pleaſed to wonder that Lord Thurlow ſhould call a libel. And, certainly, if that noble and learned perſon meant that it was like former libels, we might join in Mr. Miles's wonder. It ſo far ſurpaſſes them, that perhaps he is right in thinking it ought not to have the ſame name. All that had been hitherto known of licentiouſneſs and ſcurrility among mankind, was decorum and propriety when compared with this pamphlet. But as Mr. Miles's production is not worth the trouble of coining a new word, we muſt be content, with my Lord Thurlow, to call it a libel, notwithſtanding the inadequacy of that ex-

* Letter to the Prince of Wales. Appendix, p. 22. It is not a little curious to obſerve, how much pains this man has taken to collect and preſerve evidence againſt himſelf.

preſſion.

preſſion. In this pamphlet, which he is indignant at being thought a libel, he thinks proper to inform us, that the Prince of Wales is "an unworthy mendicant;" (Pref. p. iv.) that he "has ſquandered our property and inſulted the morals of the nation;" (Pref.p.xviii.) that his conduct is of a nature to make us loathe and diſguſt royalty;" (Appendix, p. 41.) that "his tranſactions are foul and diſhonourable;" (Id. ibid.) that "guilt and meanneſs diſputed the ſuperiority in his conduct;" (App. p.44.) that "he is diſtinguiſhed by unfeeling prodigality and inſatiable avarice*;" (App. p. 45.) by "inſolence and rapacity;" (Id. ibid.) that "the conſtitution is menaced with danger by the conduct of the male branches (all without diſtinction) of the Royal Family;" (App. p. 52.) that the conduct of the Prince is "*flagitious*;" (App. p. 55.) that he, Mr. Miles, has the merit of attempting the "ſtrong coercion of well-merited, and perhaps, well-timed reproof," to ſave the Prince

* If it were not too much to expect that ſuch men ſhould underſtand Engliſh, one might inform this writer, that though it be poſſible and even natural to combine *rapacity* and prodigality, the union of avarice and prodigality is impoſſible, and cannot be expreſſed without a contradiction in terms. Avarice implies the paſſion for hoarding as well as the paſſion for acquiring.

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of Wales from "the ſtronger and more deciſive *coercion of the axe*;" (App. p. 63.) that "he is a ſturdy beggar;" (App. p. 69.) that "he is in a ſtate of mendicity of the worſt and moſt odious deſcription;" (App. p. 70.) and, finally, that there is now a very proper "opportunity for aſking, whether a man ſo branded by Parliament as his Royal Highneſs *is a proper object to ſucceed to the Britiſh throne!*" (App. p. 84.) It was natural enough that a man who thought the office of a ſpy an "honourable" ſervice, ſhould conſider theſe ſeditious libels as a proof of his "being filled with the moſt profound reverence for the laws of his country." Lord Thurlow has the misfortune of having diſpleaſed the author, for having declared, with the vigour which belongs to his character, that the impunity of ſuch a publication was a reproach on the adminiſtration of juſtice. He has had the incredible impudence to affirm, that a jury of Engliſhmen would violate their duty and their oaths by the acquittal of the author of a pamphlet which is both legally and morally among the moſt deteſtable libels that ever appeared in the world. With ſuch matchleſs effrontery has this man been allowed to brave public decency, and to defy public juſtice in a civi-

lized age, in a free and well-ordered community, under the eyes of patient magiſtrates, and in the face of inſulted laws. And not ſatisfied with his eſcape from the pillory, which will be a laſting reproach to the vigilance and vigour of Engliſh juſtice, he has the impudence to claim public reſpect and requital for his ſervices. Not content with impunity, he claims and enjoys reward. This libeller of the Prince of Wales is allowed to boaſt that he is a penſioner of the King's Miniſter. *Fruitur Premiis et impunitate.* Nay, in the very ſame publication in which he boaſts of penſions from his Majeſty, he calls his eldeſt ſon, and the Heir-apparent to his throne, "a perſon whom it would be pollution to name!" (Correſpondence with Le Brun, p. 43.) I ſhould owe an apology to my readers for having beſtowed ſo much conſideration on the forgotten libels of a miſerable ſcribbler, if the inſtigators of his ſcurrility were as obſcure as himſelf; if my object had not been to trace, in his writings, the influence of powerful protection and accomplices. That he is unpuniſhed, that he is rewarded, would be ſtrong proofs of ſuch an influence.

But they are not the only proofs of it. We have

have here a man avowedly in the employ and pay of Miniſters for thirteen years, occupied at intervals during that whole time in libelling the Prince of Wales, and in traducing every other perſon who could inſpire the Miniſter with jealouſy and reſentment; and even in the writings where he moſt affects the diſguiſe of independence, making only ſuch gentle and faint accuſations againſt Mr. Pitt as were barely ſufficient to throw a thin veil of impartiality over his panegyrics on that Miniſter, and his invectives againſt his antagoniſts. We find him confidentially employed, patronized, paid, and protected from puniſhment by powerful individuals. We find him conſtantly employed in labouring to ſupport their power, to promote their views, to miniſter to their reſentment, to blacken their rivals, and to deſtroy the reputation of every one that was obnoxious to them. Theſe are proofs of a general connection. We alſo diſcover traces of one which is more particular. We find him libelling the Prince of Wales, in 1784, in 1791, in 1795, in 1796; during the whole of which time Mr. Miles was in the pay of the Treaſury; the Adminiſtration being in the two firſt of theſe years at open variance with his Royal Highneſs, and, in the two

laſt, wounding him more dangerouſly by their inſidious friendſhip. He was their penſioner, and they might have ſtopt his pen, if the abuſe of the Prince of Wales had been offenſive to them; and though in his own writings we find ſome faint traces of their blaming his attack on Mr. Burke, we do not diſcover the ſlighteſt veſtige of their diſapprobation of his ſcurrility againſt his Royal Highneſs. We have ſeen that their other mercenary libellers adopted the ſame ſyſtem of calumny with Mr. Miles. What need of more proofs? The darkneſs of conſpiracy will never allow us to expect clearer evidence of a ſecret combination againſt the good fame of any individual. But enough, and too much, of Mr. Miles. I have done with him. I abandon him to that oblivion from which his guilt is too mean and obſcure to reſcue him. I have obtained the object for which I condemned myſelf to wade through ſo much mud. I have fixed the ſhame of employing ſuch an agent on perſons, whom it is leſs ignominious to encounter, by an accumulation of preſumptions and probabilities which can ſcarce leave any reaſonable man in doubt, and which I defy any human ingenuity to repel. Having detected the principals, I have

no farther concern with the mercenary underling *.

Such were the agents who were employed to delude the judgement and inflame the paſſions of the public with reſpect to the private conduct of the Prince of Wales, and to turn his domeſtic misfortunes into domeſtic crimes. It would be uſeleſs to diſſemble that their ſucceſs was conſiderable. They did not owe that ſucceſs to the indignant zeal of a purer and more ſevere morality, prevalent beyond the example of former times. Never was diſſolution of manners more general, more ſhameleſs, more triumphant. They did not owe it to a prouder and more erect ſpirit of liberty that animated our forefathers, and

* Mr. Miles is afraid that the honour of letters may ſuffer from venality being imputed to him. It is impoſſible for any man to feel a ſolicitude more purely diſintereſted than *his* anxiety for the honour of letters; or an alarm leſs grounded than his fear, that literature can ſuffer through him. He alſo tells us that he hopes that the love of rectitude is congenial to the love of poetry, and prefaces this ſentiment by ſome verſes of nearly the ſame excellence with his proſe. It would be unjuſt to conclude that all bad poets are bad men; but the love of ſuch verſes as he writes may very well be compatible with the love of ſuch rectitude as guides him, without being any objection to the pleaſing and conſolatory opinion that there is a natural ſympathy between taſte in morals and taſte in literature.

which might embolden us to cenſure vice ſo exalted, that they would have ſhrunk from it with dread. Never were an age and country leſs diſtinguiſhed by that noble ſpirit; the guardian of public happineſs; the animating principle of the laws of a free ſtate; and the firmeſt ſupport of that authority on which it is a wholeſome controul. The ſpirit of licentiouſneſs we ſee among ſome; the ſpirit of cowardly acquieſcence and venal ſervility among others; but among few indeed can we diſcern any traces of that lofty and magnanimous pride of independence which glowed in the boſoms of our anceſtors, the founders of our liberty; whom, far from having ſpirit to imitate, we have ſcarce ſenſibility to admire. The ſpirit of liberty, as it in former times diſplayed itſelf in England, is, indeed, a combination of ſo many virtuous and noble ſentiments, and habits preſerved in the moſt exact balance and equipoize, where the ſlighteſt exceſs or deficiency is ſo fatal; it can only be acquired by ſo long and ſevere a courſe of moral diſcipline, and it is liable to be gradually weakened and finally extinguiſhed by ſo many cauſes, either imperceptible by human ſagacity, or uncontroulable by human ſkill, that it is no wonder it ſhould perhaps be the rareſt, as it is

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certainly the moſt valuable of all the excellent qualities which form the character of a virtuous people. There is nothing more repugnant to this noble ſpirit than baſe ſcurrility, and envious malignity againſt thoſe on whom the laws of a free commonwealth have impoſed the awful truſt of high office and high rank. Servility itſelf is ſcarce more abhorrent from the true ſpirit of liberty. The love of freedom naturally leads to the love and reverence of thoſe high magiſtrates who are the protectors of freedom. The moſt generous, proud and exalted of human ſentiments, will not ſtoop to ſuch mean and ignoble warfare. A freeman will perpetually regard the conduct of thoſe who are ſet over him with vigilance and jealouſy. He will vigorouſly withſtand their encroachments. He will reſpect them becauſe they are magiſtrates. He will watch them becauſe they are men. In circumſtances of the laſt and moſt cruel neceſſity, he will bravely reſiſt their abuſed or uſurped power. But he will leave irreverent ſlander againſt their office and character to the low, petulant and cowardly ſpirit of licentiouſneſs which inſtigates men to a little mutinous clamour and unmanly brawling in ſeaſons of ſecurity, but which unnerves and unmans them when

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the danger of public liberty calls for a vigorous ſtand and a ſerious conflict. Let the Hiſtory of England be examined in thoſe periods when the ſpirit of liberty glowed with the nobleſt ardour in the boſoms of our anceſtors. Let the annals of our civil commotions themſelves be opened, and we ſhall find that theſe gallant and high-minded men diſdained to traduce and vilify their princes even at the moment when they were compelled to reſiſt uſurpation in the field. Scurrility againſt rank and greatneſs is, in truth, as mean a homage to their ſuperiority as the moſt ſervile adulation. The flatterer and the libeller equally confeſs their own inferiority. They equally betray the painful ſenſe of their own humiliation. The one ſeeks to raiſe himſelf by meanneſs to the ſtation which he deſires; the other is prompted by envy to avenge himſelf on the greatneſs which humbles him. An independent mind, calmly conſcious of its own dignity, feels no humiliation in the preſence of greatneſs; and while it pays a willing reſpect to the inſtitutions of ſociety, is ſtimulated by no oppreſſive ſentiment of inferiority, either to court the powerful or to humble them.

It is not, then, to a ſeverer morality, or to a prouder ſpirit of liberty, that we owe the

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eager and credulous reception of ſlander. Theſe excellent virtues are incapable of producing ſuch a deteſtable conſequence; and it is fit that they ſhould be delivered from ſuch a diſgraceful imputation. The ſucceſs of the calumnies which I have refuted, aroſe from cauſes very different, and much better adapted to produce ſuch an effect. It aroſe from the inceſſant efforts and irreſiſtible aſcendant of the preſs. It aroſe from that inſatiable appetite for ſcandalous anecdote, which is one of the ſtrongeſt paſſions of unoccupied minds. It aroſe from that vanity which prompts men, in humble and private life, to boaſt their knowledge of the ſecret hiſtory of the great. It aroſe from that envious and malignant anxiety to lower every thing above us, which is ſtrengthened in the preſent age by the prevalence of opinions unfavourable to the higheſt ranks of ſociety; opinions which influence, however unconſciouſly, thoſe who are the moſt hoſtile to their ſpirit and tendency. It aroſe from the political circumſtances of the times which deprived the Prince of Wales of active friends, without delivering him from bitter and formidable enemies. It aroſe from that indignant neglect and diſdainful contempt of calumny which is natural to a mind conſcious of its own

innocence, and too proud to employ any precautions againſt ſuch abominable ſlander. It aroſe from the ſhameful example of that impunity and reward which were enjoyed by the moſt impudent libellers of the Heir-apparent to the Crown, who was ſupported by no powerful party, who employed no venal preſs, and whoſe character alone ſeemed to be unprotected by the laws. Whoever ſuppoſes ſuch a combination of cauſes inadequate to inſure ſucceſs to the moſt groundleſs calumny, muſt be unacquainted with the ſtate of the times, and, indeed, ignorant of the general character of human nature, and the general condition of human life. At a period when theſe unrefuted, becauſe deſpiſed, charges had made a conſiderable impreſſion on public opinion, an opportunity aroſe in which the Prince of Wales ſhewed that he was not indifferent to the intereſts of that public which treated him with ſo much injuſtice. I allude to his offer of undertaking the government of Ireland on the generous condition of being authorized to bear the glad tidings of union and conciliation to that diſtracted country. There is, perhaps, no example in hiſtory of an infatuation ſo prodigious and monſtrous as that which has influenced the Britiſh Government for the laſt

three years in their conduct towards Ireland. We loſt America in a ſtruggle for great legiſlative powers. The conteſt was moſt unwiſe; but the object was, at leaſt, ſpecious and alluring. There is ſome dignity in the ſtruggles of an ambition which contends for grand and ſplendid objects. But the Parliament of Great Britain had abandoned the legiſlative power and her judicial authority over Ireland without a ſtruggle. The Parliament of Ireland had almoſt unanimouſly repealed the penal ſtatutes againſt Catholics, which diſgraced their criminal code—the moſt important political diſabilities which diſgraced their Conſtitution. They were about to have repealed the remainder, under the auſpicious adminiſtration of Earl Fitzwilliam. The moment ſeemed at length arrived when every heart in Ireland was to be united in affection to the Britiſh empire, and every hand ready to be raiſed for its defence. But this fair proſpect was ſuddenly blaſted by a mandate of the Engliſh Government, *Verboſa et grandis epiſtola venit a Capreis*. The harmony of the Iriſh nation, and the ſafety of the Britiſh empire, were ſacrificed to a cabal of Iriſh intriguers. Lord Fitzwilliam was recalled. His Patriot Miniſters were diſmiſſed. His wiſe ſyſtem was

of dismissing some of the oldest, ablest & most faithful Servants of the Public at his pleasure.

abandoned. From that moment all hope of union, quiet, generous obedience, and affectionate loyalty, was baniſhed: diſcontent, diſcord, confuſion, and bloodſhed, followed. Pariſhes, diſtricts, counties, were ſucceſſively put out of the protection of the law. The faireſt province of Ireland has been abandoned to all the horrors of military execution; the whole kingdom is in a ſtate far more alarming and deſperate than that of open civil war. We have at length lived to ſee the time when the ſeparation of Ireland is become a ſubject of ſerious diſcuſſion. Theſe are, indeed, ſubjects more fitted for meditation than diſcourſe. It is impoſſible calmly to contemplate, and it might be dangerous fully to diſplay them. He muſt have a ſtout heart, or a ſtupid head, who can now look forward without ſhuddering. "Were "theſe dreadful things neceſſary?" Were they the fatal, but inevitable, reſult of the noble, though ineffectual, ſtruggle of public wiſdom for the preſervation of order and the laws againſt a daring and irreſiſtible licentiouſneſs? While crimes have been puniſhed, have grievances been redreſſed? Has the policy of the Government been as conſpicuous in removing the grounds of juſt diſcontent, as in repreſſing audacious and criminal

minal diſaffection? Can we truly ſay, "*potuit quæ plurima virtus eſſe, fuit?*" It cannot be pretended. A great majority of the people of Ireland are ſtill excluded from the moſt important benefits of the conſtitution. You anſwer, that the grievances of the Catholics are only a pretext. Take away the pretext, and the truth will be aſcertained; the ſtate of the country will be laid open. You tell us, truly, that we are expoſed to the attacks of the moſt powerful and formidable enemy that ever threatened the deſtruction of this empire, and you alienate the minds of the people of Ireland from the common defence. You tell us of the neceſſity of union, and you contend for laws of diſcord. You ſpeak of a deſperate republican faction, and you recruit their ſtrength by two-thirds of the population of Ireland. You diſplay, perhaps you exaggerate, their numbers; and you drive the whole Catholic body into their arms. When you extenuate the grievances of the Catholics, you ſay that their preſent diſabilities are frivolous. When you are called upon to abrogate them, they become on a ſudden ſo important, that a repeal would be a moſt dangerous innovation: Are they frivolous? It is idle to ſtruggle for them. Are they grievous? It is tyranny to maintain

maintain them. Would the repeal be an innovation? What becomes, then, of the pretence, that the Parliament of Ireland have been innovating during the laſt five years in favour of the Catholics? Let us no longer be inſulted by contradictory arguments. The peace of a great country is too valuable to be ſacrificed for the preſervation of theſe diſabilities, if they be trifles; and if they be important, let us not purchaſe the loſs of empire by the maintenance of oppreſſion and injuſtice *. To obviate theſe terrible miſchiefs,

* This language I addreſs to the Britiſh Government. If I were ſpeaking to Iriſhmen, I ſhould uſe a different language. I ſhould admoniſh to reflect on the conſequences of ſeparation. I do not ſpeak of the horrors of the convulſion. I do not ſpeak of the ſhock of tearing aſunder all the ties of property and connection, all the habits of intercourſe which unite both kingdoms. I ſpeak of the permanent conſequences of a ſeparation. Let every good man in Ireland ſeriouſly reflect on the frequent and almoſt perpetual wars, imbittered by indignation at former oppreſſion on the one ſide, and by regret for the loſs of power and territory on the other; to which cloſe neighbourhood, commercial jealouſy, accidental reſentment, and foreign intrigue, would infallibly give riſe. Let him conſider that the memory of ancient connection, the deſcent from the ſame ſtock, the uſe of a common language, would communicate to theſe conteſts all the perſonal and factious rage of civil war. Let him reflect on the ſcene of bloodſhed and ravage, which the hitherto-peaceful and friendly ſhores of the two iſlands would then exhibit. Let him

chiefs, the Prince of Wales offered to undertake the government of Ireland, demanding no terms for himſelf, and ſtipulating only for the rights of the Iriſh people, and the tranquillity of the Britiſh empire. It was an offer which became his ſtation as the firſt citizen of the commonwealth. It was the duty of the Heir-apparent to the Crown to ſeek the poſt of danger. His Royal Highneſs diſcharged that duty. It is always preſumptuous to aſſert with confidence, what would have been the effect of an untried meaſure. But there are few ſchemes of policy which appeared of fairer promiſe than this conciliatory miſſion. It ſeemed an act

him conſider to what a ſtate of weakneſs they would both be reduced by diviſion at a moment when the greateſt and moſt gigantic power is raiſed in Europe which it has ſeen ſince the days of Charlemagne. Let him remember, that every power at war with England would laviſh their intrigues and their gold to plunge Ireland into unprofitable and deſtructive conteſts. I wave the benefits of the Britiſh conſtitution inſeparable from the Engliſh connexion, becauſe I chooſe to dwell on thoſe arguments which may have weight even with conſiderate Republicans. To them I would obſerve, that England is a ſafer ally than France, if it were only that ſhe is leſs powerful. Ireland muſt chooſe between theſe two countries; and let Iriſhmen call to mind the calamities entailed on Scotland for four centuries by her wars with England, flowing from her alliance with France.

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of grace and juſtice to be done in the moſt gracious and dignified manner: while it redreſſed the grievances, and appeaſed the diſcontents of the Iriſh nation, it was likely, alſo, to gratify their feelings, and conciliate their affection. The dignity of the perſon would have been a pledge to Ireland of the reſpect and conſideration which was entertained for her by the ſiſter kingdom. It was fit, in the preſent circumſtances, that a conceſſion ſhould appear to originate in the royal family, to iſſue directly from them, and thus to contribute, by its popularity, to the ſtrength and preſervation of the monarchy. It was ſurely deſirable, if the Prince of Wales had committed any indiſcretions, that ſo fair and noble an opportunity ſhould be afforded him of redeeming his errors, and burying them in oblivion by ſignal ſervice to his country. His Majeſty's Miniſters, however, thought fit to reject his Royal Highneſs's propoſition, and by ſo doing they have incurred the awful reſponſibility of the evils which now afflict, and of the ſtill greater evils which threaten Ireland; ſince they have rejected the only meaſure which promiſed to reſtore the quiet of that unhappy country. What were the motives of that rejection, it is not very important to inquire.

quire. Whether it aroſe from a blind and obſtinate attachment to the fatal ſyſtem of their Iriſh politics, or from that jealouſy of the royal family which has been of late too conſpicuous to be diſguiſed by any art; or from that bitter and rancorous animoſity againſt the Prince of Wales, which has actuated the whole of their adminiſtration; they will find it equally difficult to ſilence the reproaches of their own conſcience, and to encounter the accuſations of the country in the hour of calamity and confuſion, which their miſguided counſels ſeem to be but too ſurely and too ſpeedily preparing for this devoted empire. But whatever may be the motives or the conſequences of their actions; whatever may be the judgement of the public, and of poſterity, on their conduct; the propoſition of the Prince of Wales muſt be univerſally allowed to have been worthy of his ſtation and of his character; diſintereſted, generous, and (according to his views of the national intereſt) wiſe and public ſpirited. He, at leaſt, will have nothing with which he can reproach himſelf in the worſt calamity that can befall Ireland. He has done his utmoſt to preſerve the union and the quiet of the two kingdoms. Sorrow he

muſt feel, but it will be ſorrow unembittered by remorſe. He will ſcarce envy thoſe men who, at the ſight of the convulſions and agonies of their country, will be tortured by the conciouſneſs that they have omitted, and even reſiſted, every attempt to heal her wounds.

I have thus endeavoured diſpaſſionately to review the principal accuſations which have been made againſt the Prince of Wales, to examine their grounds, to prove their falſehood, and to account for their temporary ſucceſs. The courſe of my argument has compelled me to wade through many miſerable libels, and to mention ſome wretched ſcribblers, whoſe names it is impoſſible to utter without almoſt as much diſguſt as attends the peruſal of their abominable productions. But if this humiliating toil ſhould contribute, in any reſpect, to the diſcovery of truth, or to the vindication of innocence, I rejoice that I have ſubmitted to it. I have been obliged to diſcuſs ſome political queſtions at a moſt critical moment, when opinions are extremely divided, and party zeal cannot be lukewarm. I have been ſolicitous to treat all men's opinions with as much tenderneſs as is conſiſtent

tent with a regard to juſtice, and with the ſincere declaration of my own ſentiments. Before I conclude, let me be allowed to addreſs a few words to the ſeveral parties into which the kingdom is divided. To the friends of oppoſition I have little to ſay. They have contributed, in no degree, to the favourable reception of calumnies againſt the Prince of Wales, except by an inactivity in in his defence, which it is not very eaſy to blame. To the honeſt partizans of Mr. Pitt I would earneſtly repreſent the danger of countenancing calumnies, which, though they may gratify the reſentment, and for a time ſtrengthen the power, of a miniſter, yet muſt degrade the dignity, impair the vigour, and expoſe to the moſt imminent peril, the very exiſtence of the government. The zealous ſupporters of monarchy would do well ſeriouſly to conſider, whether the moſt effectual means of paving the way for its ſubverſion be not to root out every ſentiment of affection and reſpect which has been hitherto felt by the people for the reigning family. The time is not, perhaps, yet paſt for men of rank and fortune ſoberly to reflect, whether, in the eagerneſs of their appetite for ſcandalous anecdote, they are not giving currency

to opinions of which they may feel the bitter fruits, at no very diſtant period, in beggary and exile—*magno cum optaverit emptum intactum Pallanta.* To republicans themſelves, who are ambitious of ſupporting the high pretenſions of the republican character to ſtern dignity and exalted purity, I would repreſent the baſeneſs of promoting their cauſe by calumny, the meanneſs of attempting to ſupport it by the exaggeration, or even the diſplay of private foibles; the diſtruſt which ſuch a conduct betrays in the ſucceſs of that appeal to diſpaſſionate reaſon, of which they ſo confidently boaſt, and the inevitable tendency of a ſyſtem of ſlander to taint public morals, to eradicate benevolence, candour, and mutual indulgence, from the minds of men, to plant in their ſtead univerſal diſtruſt, ſuſpicion, and malignity; to imbue every political change with the ſanguinary ferocity of the darkeſt private reſentment; and to unfit the nation for that very republican government of which they are enamoured, but which, without national virtue, will, by their own confeſſion, be a confederacy of ruffians. Royaliſts, if they have the common reaſon of men, republicans of honour and wiſdom, muſt alike deteſt and reprobate a ſyſtem of calumny,

calumny, equally abject and atrocious, which may, indeed, be inſtrumental in ſubverting a monarchy, but which, inſtead of being uſeful in building up a commonwealth, tends to looſen the cement which equally holds together all the ſocieties of mankind, under whatever forms their government may be adminiſtered, or by whatever name it may be diſtinguiſhed.

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